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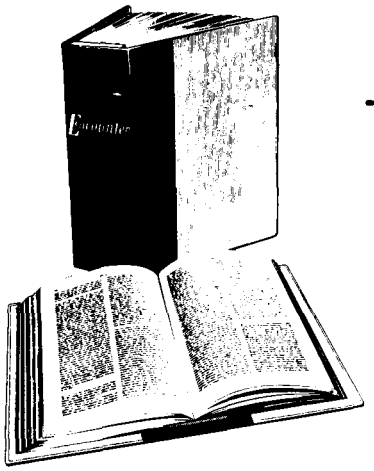

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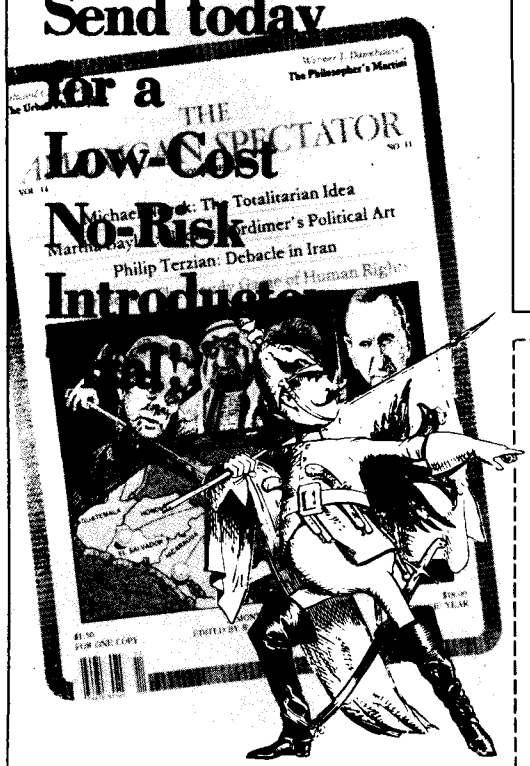

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Malcolm Bradbury

Rates of Exchange

Recep.

Dr Petworth is an old and practised cultural traveller. Today, in this late summer of 1981, he stands in the lobby of the airport at Slaka, but really he might be anywhere; year after year he has been coming, coat over arm and bags at knee, through the arrivals labyrinths of airports with wildly different names—Madrid or Helsinki, Tunis or Teheran—but with the same fluttering flight-boards, the same sea of faces, the same incomprehensible, polyglot announcements, emerging, pausing, putting down his luggage, in the firm expectation that his coming will be noticed. He is a person of no great interest, not a character in the world-historical sense, a man waiters neglect and barmen save till last; yet he believes that someone will always step forward from the crowd, shake his hand, lead him to the car-park, and put him in the way of a familiar plot of days, quite as familiar as the domestic world he has not been sorry to leave behind. He confidently expects to be taken to the city, signed in at some downtown hotel already apprised of his coming, handed to a bellboy, left for a while to shower, shave, freshen and change knickers, be collected again, driven to one of the town's better quarters, taken upstairs to an apartment, with a good view, a maid holding a tray of drinks, a host in something formal, a hostess in something ethnic; where, in the rooms, the professors come and go, talking of T. S. Eliot, professors who will seize on him, reminisce about the Oxford colleges they long ago went to, say Lacan to his Derrida, Barthes to his Saussure, and discuss, quite as if they had read them deeply and long ago, and not just glanced at them hastily that afternoon in expectation of his arrival, the several books that he has published.

All this Petworth expects, as he comes through the arrivals labyrinth, because he is a man with a sign. From the handle of his briefcase there dangles a puce and magenta tag; it is the identification tag of the British Council, an organisation designed to bring scholars like himself to the cities of the world. Between him and the Council, a compact exists. The Council representatives have their responsibilities: meeting and greeting, driving and arriving, tending and mending, liquoring and succouring, showing slides and fixing rides, detaching and onwardly despatching. And Petworth, in turn, has his: coming, meeting, chatting, eating, drinking, talking, listening, walking, imparting and finally departing, on to the next place, so that the cycle can resume. A simple system, it has always worked well; hotels of modest comfort have always been found, with a booking in his name or one like it. Restaurants of pleasant ambiance have from time to time been frequented. At appropriate times Petworth has been taken to academic buildings, where the stairwells are alive with the smell of disinfectant, been offered coffee or something stronger, introduced to those who in turn will introduce him, then led through long corridors past student posters everywhere much the same, advertising exhibitions of Expressionist art and attacks on the régime, their own or someone else's, into sudden large lecture-halls: where students, their physiognomies, clothes and skin-pigmentation differing somewhat, though by no means as much as you might think, from country to country, according to which one this happens to be today, are stacked in rows to stare at him, look at his tie, and listen as well as they can or they care to, while Petworth stands on the podium and divulges, in the complexities of the English tongue, the complexities of the English tongue.

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Like the students, the countries differ in detail. Some allow no mention of Jesus, and some no mention of anyone else; some have statues of long-dead scholars in the courtyard and students whose eyes are always on the ground, and some have tanks and armed troop-carriers in the forecourt, and students whose fists are always in the air, yet the impression—because it is an impression of lecture-rooms, hotels, restaurants and receptions—is always rather much the same. There are moments that do stand out: a certain affair of a suitcase lost in Bogota once; a certain matter of a girl called Irina in Bratislava (but that was in another country, and the wench now has tenure); a meal composed of grass in Kyoto, another of poisoned seafood in Singapore; a notable performance of *Hamlet* in Belize, a notable performance of belly-dance in Hammamet. As in life itself, familiarity is occasionally fractured and transformed by surprise and variation, sometimes but not usually in the form of pleasure. And today, in Slaka, there is one. For here is Petworth, sweating, red-faced, troubled, fresh from Slaka's turbulent labyrinth of arrival. He stands in the crowded lobby, his back to a pillar, the busy faceless crowds around him, the meeters and greeters, the pushers and jostlers, clustering round the small white door marked NOI VA. His coat over his arm, his luggage beside his feet, his face turns expectantly, this way and that; the puce and magenta tag hangs from the handle of his bag of lectures. The sun diminishes, the armed men walk up and down. But Slaka is the capital of a hardline country of the socialist bloc, a member of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact, suspicious of the Western cultural agencies; as a result, there is, in Slaka, no British Council office or representative at all.

NOW ALL THIS has been explained to Petworth at a very brief briefing, given him by a grey-haired lady smoking Player's Number Tens from a tiny packet, in a dark old office with high cupboards somewhere high up in the British Council building in Davies Street, London, some ten days before his present journey. It is, this day ten days gone, a very bleak wet day; Petworth, down from Bradford on the early morning train, with visas yet to collect and flights to check, sits damply on a wooden chair, staring at a lithograph portrait of Shakespeare and an old poster for the Berliner Ensemble. He holds a plastic cup of coffee of very murky consistency; a secretary in a ra-ra skirt keeps stepping in and out with files; water from his mackintosh is making a puddle on the Council floor. In Oxford Street, round the corner, the usual ambulances and police cars heehaw; he can see, through the window, the Royal Wedding bunting, dripping rain on to the sheikhs and their spouses who are shopping below. "There's no British Council there?" he says, shaking the coffee and pondering the impossible thought. "No, we're not represented in several of the socialist countries", says the grey-haired lady, dropping ash over a thick file which is, Petworth presumes, his own, "They think we spy and bring in bad books, perish the thought." "How is this tour arranged, then?" asks Petworth. "What we have is a cultural exchange agreement", says the grey-haired lady, patiently, "It's directly negotiated each year between their government and HMG. Our part's minimal, we just arrange your travel out there and point you to the plane. After that, you're in the hands of their Ministry of Culture. They'll look after you, rather well, I expect, unless the political climate changes. You know how these things work. They flow when it thaws and block up when it freezes, just like the lav down the corridor." "I see", says Petworth, "So money, my hotel, my programme?" "All their responsibility", says the lady, cheerfully.

"Tell me", says Petworth, sitting in his puddle, "Would you say now things were thawing or freezing?" "Well, thawing, really", says the grey-haired lady, "Or they wouldn't have asked you. On the other hand, things are beginning to freeze again. Since Afghanistan and the Reagan hard line and the failure of *détente* and the collapse of SALT. Actually we're very interested in your visit, because it's rather a test of the mood. If it goes well, we'll hope for more. Of course if it goes wrong, we'll reassess the whole programme." "Goes wrong?" asks Petworth, looking up, "How might it go wrong?" "Well, it does happen", says the grey-haired lady, opening up the file in front of her and looking into it, "Tell me, my dear, you aren't a bugger, are you?" "Pardon?" asks Petworth. "There's nothing here about your sexual tastes", says the lady. "I

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see", says Petworth, "No, I'm not." "Not that we're against buggers in the Council", says the lady. "I always thought not", says Petworth. "One's all for life's pleasures", says the lady, shaking out the match with which she has just lit a fresh cigarette, "The trouble is there's very high surveillance there, and their security police—they're called HOGPO, actually—are rather keen on that sort of thing. They find it very good grounds for blackmail. One can hardly blame them, really, they've done rather well out of our British taste, as you well know." "I suppose so", says Petworth. "Yes, if one were asked to sum up Eastern Europe in a phrase", says the lady, "One would say it was their buggers listening in on ours. So you're totally hetero, my dear." "Well, I am, yes", says Petworth, staring down into the gloomy grounds of the coffee. "Well, in that case", says the lady, "Do be careful. Practise out of sight, and above all avoid the whores in all the main hotels and nightclubs." "I will", says Petworth. "And they'll undoubtedly give you a guide-interpreter", says the lady, "Sometimes they're tough old biddies, but sometimes they go for rather attractive young females. Think of her as totally forbidden fruit, it's probably a plant. Remember, in this world, everyone reports to someone; them to theirs, us to ours." "But I don't", says Petworth, "And I have no information worth having whatsoever. Except about linguistics." "Yes, well, we'll come to that in a minute", says the lady, "More coffee?" "No, thank you", says Petworth, steaming in his chair.

YES, WELL, NOW, my dear", says the lady, "I'm not sure what hotel they'll put you in, probably the Europa. But do assume as a matter of course that the room is bugged, most of them are. There's not much you can do about it, except take care. But I always like to hang a towel over the mirror when I get into bed. They photograph through them, you know, and you never are sure what you'll be doing. Of course nowadays they've got these advanced multi-directional microphones that can pick up anything at enormous distances, so if they're interested in you they can usually find you. But if you're talking to anyone, or worse, try banging spoons on the woodwork, or run the shower and do it in the bathroom. Better still, go outside. The only real place to chat or make love is in a newly ploughed field, but they're not always easy to come by." "I suppose not", says Petworth. "There are all sorts of ways of getting you if they want you", says the lady, "But do avoid illegal currency transactions. Everyone will try to buy your Western money, but it's a crime against the state and they can put you in prison for years. And don't bring papers or documents out of the country, however compassionate the story; that's another favourite. Always stick firmly to the titles of your lectures, don't comment on national events, and try to keep all politics right out of it." "Well, there aren't many politics in linguistics", says Petworth. "I expect that's why they chose to ask you", says the grey-haired lady, "But you'd be surprised. If you should get picked up by HOGPO at all, try not to eat anything. They're particularly fond of drugged chocolates and poisoned cigarettes, for some reason. Of course all these are just common-sense precautions; nothing's likely to happen to you. Unless they suddenly decide they want to trade someone for someone, or something." "I see", says Petworth, "I think I will have another cup of coffee."

"Sorry I couldn't offer you lunch", says the lady, "I've found the most marvellous Indonesian round the corner, but you know our budget's been cut, like everyone else's. Georgina, Dr Petworth would love another cup of your coffee. I say, dear, haven't you had your hair done? I think it's super." "Thank you", says Georgina, "Same again?" "Black this time", says Petworth. "Well", says the grey-haired lady, snapping shut the file in front of her, and smiling at him. "I'm sure you'll have the most marvellous tour there. I was posted there, you know, I loved it. Slaka's a very delightful city, you know, lots of old buildings and parks and flowers and gipsy music. And you're perfectly entitled to dismiss your guide when you're not working, and get in lots of sightseeing. Incidentally, let me recommend the cathedral. It's just out of town, but the ikons are marvellous, and I always say you can't get into much trouble in a cathedral. There's a lot of very nice craftwork, some of it you can't bring out, but do watch out for the handmade embroidery. Your wife, you've got one, haven't you, will love it, and you might as well buy masses, since you can't bring any money out with you, you know. Ah, here's Georgina with your

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lovely coffee. And, look, here's a little booklet you might find useful. It's not actually for academic visitors, but it's full of wise saws and modern instances. You know, like the voltages, and so on." "Well, thank you", says Petworth, taking the coffee, and *Helpful Hints for British Businessmen.* "And if you should get into trouble", says the grey-haired lady, "We've telexed the British Embassy to forewarn them about your tour. Of course it's a very small embassy, Slaka's not exactly the centre of the world, but there's a second secretary there named Steadiman who does traffic accidents and a bit of culture. He'll give what help he can in any emergency. I've put the address in your papers, and you'll find the number in the Slaka telephone book, I expect. If they allow you to see one. Yes, I loved it there, marvellous posting. The only thing was not being able to talk to anyone. When I got back, I just talked and talked and talked, for twenty days. And ate chocolates. As you know, their economy's weak, and you don't find many delicacies."

IT IS GLOOMY in the British Council office, with its dark old corners, on this exceptionally bleak day. The rain falls outside; and the sunshine is not shining in Petworth's heart either. He knows and has read the stories, of frontiers and guardposts, spies and imprisonments, beatings and treacheries, that we delight ourselves with in this dark world; and perhaps if he were a stronger character than he is, or is said to be, he would protest now that he does not really wish to be put into one. But then he knows he is not being put into one, rather a version of the old and familiar story, the lecturer's tale, with stock theme and minor variations. He drinks the coffee, the lady blows smoke: "Well, I think that's really it", she says, "It's all common sense. No currency deals, no buggery, no political statements, no private talks, in bedrooms or public places, no documents, towel over the mirror. And do watch the ladies; I think you get the point." "Yes, I think so", says Petworth, "Beware of foreign parts." "Exactly", says the lady, "And just one more thing. We'd like a brief report when you get back. Purely on academic matters, state of the universities, and so on. Don't make your notes while you're there, of course, keep them in your noddle and then jot them down when you're back in, where is it, Bradford?" "Yes, Bradford", says Petworth. "Well", says the lady, standing up, and walking him toward the door of the dark office, "Have a marvellous time, enjoy yourself. And do let us know when you return safely." "I will", says Petworth, "If I do." "Well, of course you will", says the lady, "It's a terrific experience. Georgina, he's going." "Bye", says the secretary, picking up the file from the desk, "Sorry about the coffee."

And so, his face looking a little bleak, and not unlike the day, Petworth walks, in his damp mackintosh, out of the dark, British Council office and across the corridor toward the rickety British Council lift, which stands waiting. At the back, a sign forbids more than six people to travel in it at once; ten laughing Japanese, blue airline bags hanging over their shoulders, cameras round their necks, beckon excitedly to him to get inside. He steps into the elevator, as if into an unwanted future; around him, the Japanese now all begin to press conflicting buttons at the same time, with the result that the lift jogs up, jogs down, and visits every single floor in the building before it descends at last to street level, where Petworth, *Helpful Hints for British Businessmen* held in his hand, steps out into Davies Street, amid the decorations and the gloom, and past the newspaper seller at the tube station, who is advertising some new strike for the summer silly season, to go on about his business, find his visa, check his ticket, make his plans. And it is in consequence of all these arrangements, or the lack of them, that he now finds himself in the dusty airport concourse of the airport at Slaka, standing against a pillar near the door marked NOI VA, his luggage tumbled by his feet, while the great crowd bobs around him, and the clock on the wall ticks away the time.

AND AWAY THE TIME GOES; it is thirty minutes since he came through the door, thirty minutes in which nothing has happened. The puce and magenta tag still dangles from the briefcase at his feet, a sterile sign, a meaningless meaning; the crowd mills, and faces swim into existence and then fade again. The other passengers of Comflug 155, the besuited

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men, the elderly ladies, have all long since come through the doors behind, to be welcomed and kissed, hugged and enfolded, laughed over and given flowers, taken off through the crowd, led through the exit doors, hurried off into the forecourt, removed into life. But nothing of this sort has happened to him; there has been no meeter to meet him, no greeter to greet him. Outside, beyond the dusty glass, the red sun has been steadily slipping down, and most of the blue buses in the parking lot have long since been driven away; in the coming dusk, the golden onion has ceased to be golden, but has begun to turn toward a shade of black. From Petworth's face too a certain glow has gone: the confident expectation he wore as he came out from the arrivals labyrinth has turned to doubt, and even to a tiny touch of fear. Things, of course, should be well; there is an organisation behind all this. For somewhere, if the typist of the grey letter in his pocket has got matters clear, and translated the information correctly, if the dates are accurate and the British and Slakan calendars analogous, if he has himself comprehended all facts correctly and those with whom he has been dealing have done the same, then he should be passing now from the hands of Davies Street to the hands of Stalingradsimutu, from the closed file of the British Council to the open one of the Min'stratii Kulturi Komitet'iii.

On the other hand, it is apparent that certain things could have gone wrong. He has, after all, come on a flight that, thanks to the Heathrow strike, many thought would not take off at all; he has come on a plane that has descended two hours late, and on top of that he has been delayed for an hour in the labyrinth of entry; he has arrived on an arrangement which, if one closely inspects—and by now he has very closely inspected—the grey letter, actually appoints no specific places of rendezvous, means of contact, type of encounter. The chances for confusion are many, and confusion in these matters is not unknown, even when travelling with the British Council, which he is not. The clock ticks on; he has been here forty minutes; the crowds, the noise, the dust rage around him in the long concourse. Airport lobbies all over the world are, if one passes through them quickly, as one usually does, much the same anywhere; but the more time one spends in them, the more minor variations grow apparent. Thus, at Schiphol, Amsterdam, there is a Diamond Shop; at Frankfurt one may find Dr Müller's Sex Shop; so in either place one may pick up that last-minute present she has always wanted. And other airports, when recalled, offer a similar infinitude of delights; bars and banks, radio-shops and ski-shops, shoe-shine parlours and fast-food outlets, souvenir stalls and bookstores. By comparison, the arrivals hall at Slaka is simplicity itself; its services are minimal. There is, to one end, under the clock that ticks away his time, a small kiosk, displaying some pens, a few postcards, and some copies of *P'rtyii Populatiii*, with a sign over it saying LITTI. In the centre, there is another stall, with a girl in a blue uniform behind it, writing on a form; the sign over this says COSMOPLOT. At the further end is a third stall, marked AVIS; it has a notice on it saying, in English, "We Try Harder", and no one on duty.

BEYOND THIS, there is nothing. There is, for example, no telephone kiosk, from which, if he had money, he might call the Min'stratii Kulturi Komitet'iii on Stalingradsimutu and declare his arrival, though even that would presumably be unprofitable, since, as *Helpful Hints for British Businessmen* helpfully hints, banks, offices, and state trading organisations are closed on Saturdays and on Sundays, the day that this is. There is no place to get money, no bank or change desk (*camb'yii*) to which he can turn for local currency, though, if there was, it would, this being Sunday, probably be closed anyway. Having no money, there is no way he can take the airport bus to the Comflug offices in the city (no check-in facilities) where it is just possible that his meeter might even now be waiting, nor take a taxi to Stalingradsimutu, where he might find a guard or a porter who could find a host or a receiver who could find a hotel, or just sit on the steps. There is no place marked *Information*, where he might get some, or even *Enquiries*, where he might try to. Another sort of man might do something; grow angry, take action, leave arrivals and go to departures, there to try to change his return ticket and get back on the flight back to London, if there is one, or even go back through the door marked NOI VA and ask for assistance. But Petworth, in

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his dogged way, knows the sort of story he should be in, and he is prepared to wait and let it come to him: a story not of frontiers and guardposts, spies and imprisonments, beatings and treacheries, but a simple story, commensurate with his talents and limitations, a story of small hotels and large lecture-rooms, of faculty lounges where grey professors talk about incomprehensible educational reforms which are hardly worth comprehending anyway, since they will be transformed again within the year, and bright girl assistants discuss the deeply dull theses they mean to write, and of occasional evening receptions where, drink in hand, Petworth can chatter brightly on about matters of common fascination, Hobson's Choice and Sod's Law, birds in the hand and frogs in the throat, a story of, in short, everyday life.

And so he stands there in the lobby of Slaka airport, with fifty minutes gone since his arrival, his luggage at his feet, with no meeter, no greeter, no money, no city, no hotel, no food, no bed, no lectures, no professors, no, in a sense, future. A fresh flow of passengers, men in dark suits, women in dark dresses, entire families of six or seven, all dressed in their Sunday best, a complete football team in their blue blazers, streams out through the door marked NOI VA. He turns to see; when he turns back, someone is standing in front of him. It is a small unshaven man, in dirty black trousers, grey shirt, exposed braces, a small denim cap. He smiles at Petworth, with a twisted smile: "Private Tacs", he says, bowing slightly. It seems to Petworth that Private Tacs is an odd emissary; but messages come everywhere in strange packets, and this is a proletarian country. "Petworth", says Petworth, holding out his hand. The man does not take it: he shakes his head. "You like private tacs to Slaka?" he says, "I take dollar, Anglisch pount, very cheap rate." "I see", says Petworth, temptation flowering suddenly in his mind; a path to survival opens before him. "You like stay private house?" asks the man, "Very cheap, dollar only, pount." Temptation grows, but currency offences are crimes against the state, attracting the most severe penalties: "No, thank you", says Petworth, standing solidly against his wooden pillar. "Okay", says the man, stepping back and disappearing, with a magical rapidity, into the crowd. A hope come, and then gone again, Petworth leans sadly back against the wooden pillar, staring up at the clock, which has now ticked away an entire hour since his arrival here.

BUT NOW ANOTHER PLANE must have come in, for in front of him the crowd mills and eddies frenziedly; he stands there with his feet protectively set over his luggage as the people press busily by. Then in the mass a space appears; in the space he sees, some little distance away, someone standing there, halted, looking across, smiling at him questioningly. It is a lady, in her middle years; she wears a big black coat with a fake fur collar. Petworth smiles faintly in return; the lady looks and twists her hair, which appears to be a large blonde wig. Again it is not the sort of emissary that Petworth has expected, but letters come in strange envelopes, and this is a different land, under another ideology; he raises an eyebrow. The lady, smiling a little more, begins to step toward him through the crowd; as she does so, she allows her coat to fall open, revealing a very low-cut dress struggling to hold in a very large bust. Petworth stares; the lady, coming closer, puckers her mouth in the gesture of a kiss. It is now that Petworth suspects temptation of another kind; the whores in the main hotels and nightclubs should be avoided at all costs. The lady comes close now, wreathed in a pall of distinct scent; now she pushes her arm through his. "Chuka, chuka?" she says. "Sorry, my mistake", says Petworth, trying to retrieve his arm, "I thought you were. . . ." "Chuka, chuka, na?" asks the lady, "For dollar, very cheap?" "Na, na", says Petworth, firmly; this is not what he has come so far to exchange. "Ah", says the lady, making a *moue*, "Very nice?" "I'm sure", says Petworth, getting his arm free, "But I'm an official visitor." The lady goes into the crowd; exhausted by his temptations, Petworth leans back against the pillar. He is tired of false messages, and wants only a true one. Then he looks up, and realises that it has very probably come.

For there, standing in front of him, smiling politely toward him, is a far more probable emissary: a middle-aged man with grey in his hair, refinement in his face, wearing a smart rectangular suit, with an honour of some sort

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in the buttonhole, and over the suit a topcoat, which is loosely draped over his shoulders. "Feder", says the man, looking at him. "Ah, Petworth", says Petworth. "Plese, Feder", says the man. "From the Min'stratii Kulturi?" asks Petworth. "Ah, Min'stratii Kulturi Komitet'iii?" says the man, "Ma na. Feder? Cueta?" "I don't understand", says Petworth. "Ah", says the man, raising a finger; then lifts his hand into the air, and seems to scribble with it. "Oh, you have a message for me?" asks Petworth. "Na, na, not a message", says the man, scribbling again in the air. "A letter?" asks Petworth. "Na", says the man, shaking his head. "You have a book?" says Petworth, "A story, a history?" "Na, ma", says the man, encouragingly. "A poem, a play, a novel", says Petworth. "How you write?" says the man, "Für schriften?" "A pencil, a brush", says Petworth. "Na, stylo", says the man. "What, a pen?" asks Petworth. "Da, da", says the man, with delight, "A pen. Please, your pen." "Ja, ja", says Petworth, agleam with the glow of literate contact, and he reaches into his pocket and produces his silver Parker ballpoint: an old travelling companion, and the true author of so many of his lectures. "Ah, da", says the man, gratefully, taking the pen, "English so hard. I do not really speak. So, slibob. In our tongue, thank you." And then the man bows, smiles, hold up the silver pen, and moves off into the crowd with it. The afterglow of literate contact remains with Petworth for a moment; then, "Here, my pen", he shouts, hurrying off after the loose overcoat, which is disappearing, with some rapidity, around the corner of the kiosk that is marked COSMOPLOT.

ANOTHER NEW FLIGHT has evidently come in: a busy new flow of passengers—old ladies, men in ties, an entire orchestra carrying their instruments in cases—streams from the doors marked NOI VA and blocks Petworth's way as he hurries in pursuit. Petworth stumbles over double basses, falls over euphonium cases; when he reaches the corner of the stall marked COSMOPLOT, the man in the topcoat has quite disappeared. The stall is decorated with posters of peasants dancing in blousy costumes, the women in trousers, the men in skirts; of a market place with a high clock tower in it; of pinnacled castles high on crags in some Transylvanian wonderland, where all stories are said to start. The girl in the blue uniform still writes away behind the desk at her document; as Petworth comes up to her, she looks up with suspicion. "Did you see a man go by, with an overcoat over his shoulders?" Petworth asks, breathing hard. "A man? You want a man?" asks the girl. "He's taken my pen", says Petworth. "Oh, yes?" says the girl, returning to her document, "Do you say a man has taken your pen? Well, I hope you do not want to borrow a pen of me. I have only one pen, and it is an official one." "No", says Petworth, "I don't want your pen. I want to find that man and get mine back." "Oh", says the girl, "Do you tell that this man steals your pen?" "He took it away from me", says Petworth. "Well, it is not my business", says the girl, "I am not policeman. You must go to that policeman over there and make a document, if you like to." The girl points—with her pen, not his pen—to one of the blue armed men, who stands a little way away from the Cosmoplot desk, his Kalashnikov automatic rifle over his shoulder, talking to a girl in a grey coat, with a shoulder-bag.

"Yes, I see", says Petworth. "Of course, if you do this, you will spend many hours at the police house, and they will make very many questions of you", says the girl, "Perhaps it is not so important, just for one pen." "It was a Parker", says Petworth. "Also I wonder if that man truly steals your pen", says the girl, still writing, "In our country such crimes are not permitted. Perhaps he likes to think you gave it to him. Perhaps if they ask him he tells you try to change it for something illegal, for dollar. Often when such things happen it is best to buy a new pen. You can buy one at this place over here, do you see it, it is marked *Litti*? There they can sell you pen. Now, do you see how busy I am? I must write on my document with my pen." "I don't suppose", says Petworth, struck with an idea, "you've had any messages for me? My name's Petworth. I'm an official visitor, and I've not been met." "Are you turstii?" asks the girl. "Am I thirsty?" asks Petworth. "No", says the girl, tapping with her pen on the desk, "Are you turstii? Do you make here a tour by Cosmoplot?" "No", says Petworth, "I'm an official visitor." "Then, please, not here", says

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the girl, "Here for turstii only." "You can't suggest any way I can get in touch with my hosts?" asks Petworth, pleadingly. "Not here", says the girl, bending her eyes to her writing, "You are in wrong place. And now you see I am busy." For a crowd of large middle-aged women, most of them with dyed blonde hair and garish plastic luggage, have suddenly swarmed around the stall, picking up leaflets and asking many questions in Russian. "Well, thank you", says Petworth hopelessly, turned back into the crush.

AN HOUR AND A QUARTER has passed now since he first came through the door marked NOI VA, a door which opens again, to emit many more new passengers: elderly men, young ladies in headscarves, a whole bevy of priests in cowls, wearing grizzled patriarchal beards. Petworth stands, looking two ways: somewhere ahead of him in the crush is his silver pen, somewhere behind him his piled luggage, the blue suitcase, the briefcase of lectures, his yellow Heathrow bag, his grey overcoat. Beyond the moving throng is the pillar where he has stood for so long, waiting for his meeter to meet him, his greeter to greet him. Jostling the old men, pushing at the priests, he pushes his way back to his territory. The pillar still stands there, with a space around it; it is only his luggage—the suitcase, the briefcase, the yellow bag, the grey coat—which has gone. He looks around, walks to the next pillar, walks back, and knows the low point of human fortune. He is here, in a foreign country, under a changed ideology; but, like some old car abandoned on the motorway, he has been stripped of all his functional equipment. He has no money, no hotel, no friends, no contacts, no pen, no property, no lectures, no books, no clothes, and, in a sense, no future at all. For a moment he thinks, not knowing what to do. "You will spend many hours at the police house, and they will make very many questions of you", the Cosmoplot girl has said, but questions are all that are left. Petworth turns and walks slowly through the moving flow of people, the black-dressed ladies, the dark-suited men, the priests in their orthodox robes, toward the armed man with the Kalashnikov, and the police house where they ask the questions.

At the Thomas Reading

When Dylan Thomas came to America
The first time and read his poems at the Y,
I was lucky enough to get a seat in the third
Row orchestra. *Everybody* was there.

A few minutes before curtain time,
Miss Marianne Moore, tricorne, and woman-friend
Walked in. They sat in front of me. The hat
Stayed on while she decried, snappily,

The price of fish that day. I vaguely thought
Of her snipping off a stanza by Hart Crane
And publishing without consulting him,
When the lights were dimmed, the curtains parted, and a hush

Descended, except on the seat in front.
The price of fish was "atrocious." "Would you please
Remove the tricorne and be quiet", I said.
She cast me a steely look. And she complied.

David Galler

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David Marquand

Is There New Hope for the Social Democrats?

Difficulties of "Breaking the Mould" in Britain

IN APRIL 1980, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was little more than a gleam in the eyes of Roy Jenkins and a handful of supporters. He had delivered the Dimbleby Lecture in London a few months before, and his offices in Brussels had been swamped by enthusiastic letters of support. A small band of non-parliamentary social democrats had begun meeting privately to prepare the ground for a breakaway party when he returned to this country. Bill Rodgers, the toughest and shrewdest of the old "Jenkinsites" (and "Gaitskellites") still in the House of Commons, had made a belligerent speech in South Wales, giving the Labour Party a year to put its house in order. One or two less prominent Labour MPs (Tom Ellis, John Horam, Robert Maclennan, Neville Sandelson) had let it be known that they despaired of the Labour Party and that they agreed, at any rate in principle, with the "Dimbleby" call for a realignment of the "radical centre."

But these swallows were far from making a summer. No one with eyes to see could doubt that the Labour Party was mortally sick, or that its sickness had created a vacuum on the Centre Left of British politics. It was clear that an explicitly social-democratic party, working in alliance with the Liberals, would have a better chance of filling that vacuum and of mobilising the growing army of alienated radicals who felt themselves disfranchised by the existing party system than the Liberals had on their own. It was clear too that the beleaguered social democrats who remained in the Labour Party could continue to remain in it only at the cost of endless concessions, endless equivocation, and an endless erosion of self-respect. But all this proved only that a new party of British social democrats had at last become possible. It did not prove that it was probable, still less that it was certain.

Certainty was a long time in coming. The Labour Right lost the battle over the compulsory re-selection of sitting Labour MPs and was systematically out-generalled in the much more important battle over the method of electing the Party leader. Tony Benn's Left won battle after battle over policy, often without encountering serious resistance. By the autumn of 1980, the Labour Party had become unapologetically unilateralist on the issue of disarmament, and was well on the way to being neutralist. It was also committed to unconditional withdrawal from the European Community and, in effect even if not in intention, to a "siege economy" on the home front. No sooner was the Party conference over than Michael Foot—old "Bevanite", old CND marcher, fundamentalist Clause-Four socialist—was elected as Party leader in succession to James Callaghan. Even more alarming from the social-democratic point of view, the preceding election campaign had shown that Denis Healey—the last, frail barrier to further left-wing advances in the Labour Party—was now running scared. Yet even after Michael Foot's election, it was still not absolutely certain that enough Labour Members of Parliament would join a new social-democratic party to make it credible in the House of Commons.

By now, the non-parliamentary social democrats in the country had lost patience. We had made up our minds to raise the standard when Roy Jenkins came back from Brussels, whether we had parliamentary support or not. Meanwhile, David Owen—originally a scornful and damaging critic of the whole "Dimbleby'" argument—had become convinced that there was no future for his brand of decentralist democratic socialism in an increasingly statist Labour Party, and had drawn the conclusion that a new party was needed after all. With characteristic courage and drive, he had begun to work actively for a split in the Labour Party; and after Michael Foot's election, his parliamentary colleagues began to give him a much better hearing

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than would have seemed conceivable a few months before. As late as December 1980, however, firm commitments from the House of Commons were still hard to come by; and it was not until Labour's ill-fated conference in Wembley in January 1981 that a significant level of parliamentary support was assured.

ALL THIS IS NOW ancient history, of course. Yet it is of more than antiquarian interest. Novelty fades so fast in an age of mass communications and instant commentary that it is easy to forget that, as recently as three years ago, the SDP did not exist: that the triumphs, disappointments, excitements and *longueurs* through which it has passed since its foundation have been squeezed into only twenty-four months. That, however, is the most important single fact about it. It has done in two years what the Labour Party took eighteen years to do, and what no other new party in the last 100 years of British history has done at all. It now has a leadership, elected by nationwide secret ballot of its members; a Party Council and National Committee (also elected by secret ballot); a constitution so impeccably democratic that it is fully comprehensible only to the Chancery barristers who drew it up; a small but well-organised national headquarters, backed by offices in most of the regions; an average of 100 members per parliamentary constituency; and a range of detailed policies, covering most of the important issues facing the country. Before long, it will also have around 300 prospective parliamentary candidates, fighting constituencies in all parts of mainland Britain. It is, in short, a fully-fledged national party, in a sense which was not true of the Labour Party until 1918 and was never true of the SDF, the ILP, the New Party, Common Wealth, the Communist Party, or the nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland.

NOT ONLY IS IT a national party, it—or, rather, it and its Liberal allies together—has presented the first serious challenge to the electoral hegemony of the two big parties since the interlocking orthodoxies of Left and Right defeated Lloyd George's campaign to conquer unemployment in 1929.

As was to be expected, the Alliance's popularity has fluctuated wildly since it came into existence in the summer of 1981. For some months, it ran ahead of the big parties. Then it ran behind. But in good and bad times alike, it has done a whole dimension better than the Liberals used to do on their own. Its peaks have been far higher than previous Liberal peaks; more important still, its troughs have been far less low than previous Liberal troughs. In January this year, it registered "only" 23% in the Gallup poll. In January 1979—three months before a general election in which they took 14% of the popular vote—the Liberals registered 4½%. The Liberals' best post-War performance in the Gallup poll was in August 1973, when they scored 22½%. At the Alliance's highest point in December 1981 Gallup gave it 50½%. After the February defeat in London's Bermondsey constituency (a safe Labour seat for 60 years) of the Left-Wing Peter Tatchell, the astonishing Liberal victory for the Alliance produced a new surge in public-opinion readings. The SDP-Liberal Alliance was recorded by MORI to be a strong second (34%), pursuing the Tories (39%), ahead of Labour (26%).

OF COURSE, THIS DOES NOT prove that the Alliance will gain ground in the next election. The only sure conclusion to be drawn from the last fifteen years of British electoral history is that no sane man would try to predict the results of a forthcoming general election months—or even weeks—before the event.

There is no doubt that the "Falklands effect" which sustained Mrs Thatcher for most of last year is now wearing off; but there is no way of telling how far or how fast the process will go. Equally, there is no doubt that the Labour Party is set firmly on a downward path, but no way of telling if it will strike one of the occasional upward stretches between now and polling day. It is clear that if the Conservatives do win the next election, they will be the first British governing party since 1959 to have won a general election after holding office throughout a normal length Parliament; and that, since the United Kingdom is much harder to govern today than it was in 1959, this would be a remarkable feat. But although all this provides plenty of material for psephological parlour games, it distracts attention from the long-term significance of the Alliance's performance.

The real point about the next election is that it is the most open for more than fifty years; and it is open because, in the constituencies even if not in the House of Commons, the two-party system has been replaced by a three-party system. By any reckoning, that is a historic achievement. It is one for which the SDP can claim most of the credit; and it too was the work of, at most, eighteen months. It is only against that background—against the back-

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ground, in other words, of headlong, almost disorienting growth—that the present position and future prospects of either the SDP or the Alliance can fruitfully be assessed.

No party member—certainly, no party member who remembers the long, anxious months between the Dimbleby Lecture and the Wembley conference, when the press mocked and parliamentary social democrats wrestled with their consciences—could complain about the speed with which the SDP has grown. It has grown fast because it was needed: because it struck a chord which no one else had managed to strike since the War: because those of us who had thought for some time that there was a vacuum to be filled on the Centre-Left of British politics turned out to be correct. Besides, the alternative to fast growth would have been no growth at all. The enthusiastic novices who flooded into the SDP in the early months grumbled because they were given too little to do, not because they were given too much. They were eager for battle, not the following year or the year after, but straight away. They wanted policies, structures, leaders. They were hungry for action; and they also seemed to have an inexhaustible appetite for conferences, committees, day schools, working parties, pamphlets, books, leaflets, and discussion papers. Their enthusiasm was our most precious asset, and it would have evaporated if we had grown more slowly.

ALL THE SAME, we have paid a price for growing fast; and it is a higher price than most of our parliamentary leaders appear to realise. The most important single reason for the SDP's early success, both in winning votes and in attracting members, was that it was new: that it offered a break from an increasingly grey and dismal recent past, and from the squalid politics of that past. The British people knew that they had been badly governed. They also knew, or at any rate sensed, that the reason lay less in the particular defects of particular policies than in "the system": in the weary defeatism of the great Whitehall departments; in the narrow sectionalism of the great producer groups; in the introversion and unrepresentativeness of the two great parties; and, most of all, in the way in which their governing institutions related to each other and to the society around them. The SDP seemed to promise a change in that system. It looked reassuringly competent, sensible and down-to-earth, but it also looked adventurous, idealistic and, above all, *different*.

There were dangers in all this, of course, as well as opportunities. The popular revulsion against the drab, immobile politics of the last twenty years was, in part, a revulsion against politics as such. That the SDP could never have accommodated. It certainly wished to be different, but it was not—could not have been, would have been wrong to be—as different as some of its early supporters hoped and expected. It was, after all, a political party, not a church fête. Its purpose was to win and exercise power, not to save souls. Its leaders were politicians like any other, engaged in the sweaty, painful business of aggregating interests and determining priorities: they were not missionaries. Those who welcomed it because they saw it as a way to escape from that business, because they saw Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins as super-Mary Poppinses, painlessly solving the country's problems with a mixture of magic, goodness and wholesomeness, were bound to be disillusioned. There is no doubt that we lost ground in 1982 partly because too many of those who had welcomed us in 1981 had done so for that reason.

YET THE OPPORTUNITIES outweighed the dangers. For the public were right to want to break away from the failures and recriminations of the recent past, right to sense that this would require a change of system as well as changes of policy, and right to see that no such change could come from the old parties which were inextricably enmeshed in the existing system.

For the best part of a generation, Britain has been trapped in a downward spiral of economic decline, political failure, and public disaffection. Because the economy declined, the public became disaffected. Because the public were disaffected, Governments lost authority. Because Governments lost authority, they could not halt the decline of the economy.

But although the spiral manifested itself most obviously and most painfully in the economic sphere, its origins were cultural and political rather than narrowly economic. The economy declined, not so much because Governments pursued the wrong policies (though they sometimes did) as because they could not make the right policies stick. Again and again, they were "blown off course"—by the trade unions, by the financiers of the City, by the nationalised industries, by the industrialists of the CBI, by the professionals of the permanent Civil Service, by the local authorities, by the Armed Forces, by the doctors, by the universities, in short

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by the whole huge regiment of organised groups which dominated the post-War polity as Bolingbroke's "caterpillars of the Commonwealth" had dominated the polity of the late 15th century. Part of the reason, no doubt, was that they lacked the will to stay on course. But their lack of will was itself a political phenomenon; and in any case it was not the main reason. A much more important one was that when they tried to appeal to the general public over the heads of the groups, the public did not respond—that, as Samuel Beer argues in his penetrating and sensitive new study of what he calls the "contradictions of collectivism",[1] they had lost the capacity to mobilise consent. And they had lost it because the system over which they presided, and by which they were thrown up, had lost legitimacy: because the people and the system had drifted apart.

HERE WAS the Social Democratic opportunity. The system had not exactly broken down. Its institutions were still there; the machinery was still intact. Judges still judged, Ministers still took decisions, Civil Servants still administered, Members of Parliament still legislated. But the machinery no longer moved. The fuel had evaporated. Trust—trust between governors and governed; trust between representatives and represented; trust, for that matter, between ordinary citizen and ordinary citizen—had disappeared, or was disappearing. The solutions on offer from the old parties had failed, or were doomed to failure. A new approach was needed, and it could be provided only by a new force.

The pragmatists' solution, the solution of the Conservative "wets" and the traditional, Callaghan-Healey Labour right, was to pretend that nothing had happened and to plough on, in the hope that something would turn up. But that solution had been tried again and again in the 1970s, and it had never worked. What might be called the ideologues' alternative—the alternative offered by the neo-liberal Conservative Right and neo-Marxist Labour Left—was to abandon the search for consent: to use the vast panoply of power available to a British Government in possession of a temporary majority in the House of Commons to force through irreversible changes in the economy, and thus make consent unnecessary.

The Conservative version of that alternative differs radically from the Labour version, of course. Mrs Thatcher is trying to eliminate the need for consent by restoring the disciplines of the unreconstructed 19th-century market, above all the discipline of endemic high unemployment. Mr Tony Benn and his supporters on the Left hope to eliminate it by establishing a command economy on the model of Castro's Cuba or on one "people's democracy" or another in Eastern Europe. But the differences are much less striking than the similarities. The neo-liberal Right and the neo-Marxist Left both hope to resolve Britain's politico-economic crisis by using the polity as a steamroller to force changes on the economy, to bring system and people together again by compelling the people to accommodate themselves to the system. As Professor Beer points out, both are the beneficiaries and, to some extent, even the products of the "populist revolt" which has helped to make the system unworkable. Both claim to be and no doubt believe themselves to be the true embodiments of the popular will. Partly because of that, both have been extraordinarily adept at appealing to popular emotions and at harnessing those emotions to their own purposes.

The fact remains that their purposes are neither popular nor populist. They are anti-popular. For both, the needs of the system are paramount. The people are to be hectored, bullied, or coerced into adapting themselves to it.

ON ONE LEVEL, it must be admitted, the ideologues' alternative looks more promising than might have been expected.

Mrs Thatcher's version of it has made the country harder, crueller, and less tolerant. It has widened the gulfs between rich and poor, successful and unsuccessful, suburb and city centre, South and North, white and black, employed and unemployed. It has inflicted much avoidable suffering on many innocent people. Despite the moral objections to it, however, it appears at first sight to have worked in its own terms. The trade unions have been humbled. The nationalised industries have been trimmed. Even the Whitehall mandarinate, the toughest and proudest of the power centres of post-War collectivism, has had to bow the knee to the Prime Minister's belief in her star. There have been no hunger marches and remarkably little rioting. Since Hillhead, there have not even been any lost by-elections. To judge from the opinion polls—and, for that matter, from my own experience of

[1] *Britain Against Itself: The Political Contradictions of Collectivism*. By SAMUEL BEER. Faber, £9.50.

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canvassing in working-class districts—rising unemployment has bred a sense of fatalistic apathy among its victims and a kind of solipsistic indifference, not of outrage among those who have escaped it.

As in the 1930s, expectations have fallen and horizons narrowed; as in the '30s, the beneficiaries have been on the Right, not on the Left. The polity has, in other words, turned out to be much more pliable than the conventional wisdom of ten or fifteen years ago held it to be. A Government which manages to dispense with the need for consent and which therefore requires only passive acquiescence to remain on course can, it appears, force much more and much nastier medicine down the throats of the British people than anyone expected. And although the present Government's success in doing this does not prove that a neo-Marxist Government would be equally successful, it would be rash to assume the contrary. The lesson of the last three years is that acquiescence has a much higher threshold than *bien-pensant* liberals generally realise. There is no reason of principle why it should prove lower for the militant Left than it has for the impassioned Right.

BY A STRANGE IRONY, however, all this has applied only to the polity. The economy is a different matter. It has proved surprisingly easy to restore the disciplines of the 19th-century market. Unfortunately, they have failed to produce the vigorous results which they produced in the 19th century.

For, in 20th-century conditions at any rate, by far the most important of these disciplines is the discipline of high unemployment. It is that which has humbled the unions, not some mysterious sea change of popular perception or preference. If it ceased to operate, they would cease to be humble. All the familiar consequences of British trade-union power and pride would return—a strong, built-in propensity to wage-inflation at the head of the list. So long as unemployment remains high, inflation can be kept on a tolerable level, without trade-union cooperation. Consent is then unnecessary; and Britain's Thatcherite counter-revolution can proceed on its way. If unemployment fell, however, trade-union cooperation would once again be a necessary condition of price stability, and the problem of consent would be posed anew. The counter-revolution has thus been made possible only by high unemployment; and although high unemployment has not brought hunger marches or violence in the streets, the policies responsible for it have brought accelerating de-industrialisation and falling competitiveness. So far, these consequences have been masked—at any rate, for those in work—by the buoyant British living standards paid for by North Sea oil. But, to put it at its lowest, it is curious that a Government dedicated to the ethic of thrift and self-denial should have been obliged to fritter away a non-renewable asset on consumption in the present, instead of investing it for the future. The fact is that Thatcherism has worked politically only because it has failed economically.

As for the likely consequences of a similar neo-Marxist experiment, these can be ascertained much less laboriously. All that is needed is to spend a short time in the queue-ridden economies of near-bankrupt Eastern Europe. The practical objections to the ideologues' alternative are, in short, as powerful as the moral ones. Despite appearances to the contrary, it can only speed up the spiral of decline. If we are to break out, acquiescence is not enough. Consent is indispensable, after all.

THIS IS THE REAL justification for the Alliance in general and the SDP in particular. It is also, however, a formidable challenge to them. If the pragmatists' solution and the ideologues' alternative are both excluded, only one course remains. The gap between system and people must be closed by changing the system to suit the people, instead of the other way around.

Despite the strains of the last fifteen years, the people are still unmistakably descended from the kindly, gentle, nobbly-faced crowds whose tolerance and good nature George Orwell celebrated in *The Lion and the Unicorn*. Democracy is still in our blood; and we still know instinctively that a willingness to compromise, which both sets of ideologues see as evidence of weakness, is essential to democracy. The ethic of fair play and the associated values of generosity, decency, and respect for others have not been driven out, either by the sullen proletarianism which has captured most of the Labour Party, or by the hard, self-regarding acquisitiveness which the neo-liberal Conservatives put at the centre of their picture of social man. We are still instinctively suspicious of ideology, and we can see that the models of our future offered by the far Right and the far Left are the products of ideology, not of life. They seem to us gimcrack, mean, and somehow bloodless; perhaps not always consciously, we hunger for something richer, more

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solid and more human. We do not want to be regimented by commissars or ordered about by bullying shop-stewards. Nor do we want to be kept in our places by fear of the sack, or treated as items in a balance sheet by some brisk young investment analyst or merchant banker. We want to break out of the spiral of decline, and we are slowly beginning to realise that we cannot do so without changing our ways, sometimes painfully. But we want the pains —and the eventual rewards—to be shared among us according to some generally accepted criterion of equity or reasonableness, not distributed randomly by a political or economic juggernaut we cannot control. The values of the British people are, in short, the values of the broad-based social-democratic tradition which the SDP came into existence to reassert; and if the system is to be remade to suit the people, it will have to be tailored to a social-democratic pattern.

TO "A" SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PATTERN, however, not to the pattern which most British social democrats have favoured for most of the last thirty years. The values embodied in the social-democratic tradition are as compelling today as they were half-a-century ago. The means through which they have been pursued for most of that half-century in Britain are no longer appropriate to the end. The now-collapsing "collectivist polity" whose contradictions Professor Beer explores was, after all, in part a social-democratic polity as well. The system from which the people have drifted was shaped, if again only in part, by social-democratic measures, framed by social-democratic Ministers to achieve social-democratic objectives.

Professor Beer's collectivist contradictions are nearly all, in one way or another, contradictions of "overload." The collectivist polity started to collapse, he shows, because it could not bear the weight of the demands which it had itself helped to generate. As class lines blurred, class-based political loyalties fragmented. To win the battle for votes, politicians promised higher living standards, financed by faster economic growth. In doing so they encouraged a "scramble for pay" on the part of the unions, a "scramble for subsidies" on the part of public and private industry, and a "scramble for benefits" on the part of a growing army of consumer groups, each looking to the public sector to satisfy its claims. All this wrecked the delicate mechanism of post-Keynesian economic management, and choked the springs on the free flow of which the possibility of faster growth depended.

The demands which overloaded the collectivist polity were not in themselves social-democratic, but they grew out of social-democratic soil. Common to them all was what Samuel Beer calls "hubristic Keynesianism"—the notion that there was no inherent limit to the resources available to Government, since the rate of growth could perfectly well be raised, if only Ministers and officials in Whitehall had the wit to pull the appropriate Keynesian levers in the appropriate Keynesian manner. Though that notion was not confined to social democrats, its most persuasive exponent was the high priest of "revisionist" social democracy, Anthony Crosland; and it was fundamental to the whole Croslandite doctrine that growth held the key to redistribution.

MUCH THE SAME is true of the "populist revolt" which has made it impossible for Governments to mobilise consent. Professor Beer thinks that the people have turned against the system because they no longer accept the deferential norms on which it was based. I agree with him, but I suspect that the process has been even more complex than he suggests.

Deference did not evaporate of its own accord. It evaporated because more and more people came to see that the system no longer worked as it was supposed to work: that its rules were being bent, if not broken. The system stopped working as it was supposed to work because it was twisted out of shape by the remorseless growth of the modern, centralist state—and by the accompanying growth of the great public and private corporations which make demands of the state and respond to demands from the state. Chief among the forces which have caused the state to grow is the assumption that social ills can most readily be treated and social progress most easily achieved by acting through the state. Like "hubristic Keynesianism", that assumption was not exclusively social-democratic; but it too was fundamental to the "revisionist" social democracy of the last generation. For Tony Crosland and his followers, "socialism" was "about equality"; and equality was to be pursued by redistributing resources away from private consumption and towards public consumption.

In effect, even if not in intention, "revisionist" social democracy was thus almost as statist as the "fundamentalist" socialism it fought; and it can fairly be seen as an unwitting part-architect of the top-heavy, over-centralised state, against which the populist revolt is a cry of protest.

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HENCE THE CHALLENGE to the Alliance and the SDP. Hence also the price which the latter has paid for growing so fast. Almost by definition, statism offers no solutions to the crisis of the state in which we are at present engulfed. If that crisis is to be resolved, and the gap between system and people closed, the values which the present generation of social democrats shares with the last will have to be realised through different instruments, used in a different way. The statist social democracy of the 1950s and '60s will have to be abandoned; and, with it, the statist assumptions and statist instincts which most social democrats over the age of thirty absorbed at the political equivalents of their mothers' knees. Social democracy will have to develop a theory of the state and—still more important—a theory of the proper limits of the state. It will also have to develop a theory of non-statist political change, and a strategy based on that theory.

That, in fact, is the real reason why the SDP came into existence in the first place. Its founders were mostly Croslandite "revisionists" who had discovered from experience that "revisionism" now needed revising, and who saw that they had no chance of revising it so long as they were trapped in the mouldering corpse of the Labour Party. They sought a new kind of social democracy as well as a new kind of politics: indeed, they saw that a new kind of politics was impossible without a new kind of social democracy. Where the social democracy of the 1950s and '60s had been centralist, paternalist, and "top-down", theirs was to be decentralist, participatory, and "bottom-up." Where the social democrats of the '50s and '60s had concentrated power in order to redistribute income, they suspected that income could not be redistributed successfully unless power were redistributed first. Where Tony Crosland and his followers had, in practice, given most weight to the Fabian strand in the social-democratic tradition, they drew on an older strand of popular radicalism going back to the Rochdale pioneers and the moral-force Chartists, to Cobbett and Wilkes, to Cromwell's regicides, perhaps even to Wyclif and the Lollards. They stood for Dissent against the Establishment, for the individual against the collective, for the raw and creative against the smooth and smug, for the provinces against the metropolis, for untidy recalcitrant humanity against the bureaucrat, the planner, and the nosey parker. In doing so, they also stood for political change, as against economic tinkering: for a different kind of policy, as against a different set of policies.

ALL THIS, however, was a mood, not a theory. Because it was a popular mood, the SDP grew fast, but because it grew fast it has so far lacked the time to give the mood a hard, theoretical cutting edge. It has produced policies in rich, perhaps by now excessive, profusion. In my view these policies are enlightened, intelligent, and humane. If they were put into practice, this country would be a better and a happier place, and it would have at least a chance of making the rest of the world a little better and happier too. But, with one or two exceptions, they are Fabian policies, not radical ones. The emphasis is on using power for beneficent ends, not on sharing or dispersing it. Here and there, the reader notices intimations of the decentralist social democracy of the future, like gleams of gold-dust in a prospector's pan. But, so far, these are only intimations. The decentralist theory we need if we are to be true to our original vocation—and, still more, a decentralist strategy based on that theory—is still waiting to be developed.

During the last two years, we have come much further than I, at any rate, thought possible. We are still moving in the right direction. But we have only reached the foothills. The summit remains to be scaled.

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Alun Chalfont

The Great Unilateralist Illusion

"Ignorance is Strength"

THE "great nuclear debate" is not a great debate at all; it is not even a debate. Nor, in present circumstances, can it be. There is a massive and inevitable failure of communication between one side which has so far seemed reluctant to raise its voice above a whisper and another which would not listen even if it did. Debate presupposes rational argument, a process which the unilateralist movement rejects as irrelevant. Radical activism has always relied for its effect more on drama than on discussion.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is not to persuade those who belong to the "peace movements" that they are wrong. To engage in discourse with people who show every sign of being impervious to reason is an unsatisfactory activity. It is rather an attempt to reassure those who disagree with the unilateralists that there is a respectable argument to be deployed; to alert those who may be attracted by the word "peace", which has been kidnapped from the English language by CND in much the same way as "gay" has been pilfered by others; and to assert that fear of nuclear war need not, and indeed should not on any account, lead to the unilateralist position.

If, on the way, this brief study does anything to persuade any of the decent, confused and anxious men and women who have joined the "peace movements" that they are being duped and used by political activists, it will have succeeded beyond my expectations.

1. *An Introduction to Newspeak*

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH is one of the definitive Older examples of Newspeak. It may be necessary, especially for those born since the end of World War II, to explain that Newspeak was the sinister and corrupt language used in George Orwell's classic novel of the totalitarian nightmare—entitled, with uncanny foresight, *1984*. It was the official language devised to meet the ideological needs of *Ingsoc*, or English Socialism. It was intended that, when Newspeak eventually superseded standard English (somewhere around the year 2050), a heretical thought—namely one which diverged from the principles of *Ingsoc*—would be literally unthinkable. Newspeak consisted partly of new words and partly of old words to which new meanings had been given. The department responsible for the prosecution of permanent aggressive war was known as the Ministry of Peace; and on the white façade of the Ministry of Truth (responsible for the dissemination of official lies) were inscribed the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

It may not have occurred to many of those who describe themselves as members of "peace movements" that they are using Newspeak; and that the ritual incantations which accompany their demonstrations are disturbingly reminiscent of what were known as the Hate Sessions in *1984*, during which the people assembled before a large television screen to scream abuse at the image of Emmanuel Goldstein, the "enemy of the people." It is necessary only to substitute Reagan or Thatcher for Goldstein to bring Orwell's "proles" to life. The invention of Newspeak was a dramatic device designed to underline a simple truth, which is that the degradation and debasement of language is a routine instrument of indoctrination and deception; and that one of the unmistakable symptoms of a demoralised society is the ready acceptance of Newspeak as a form of communication. In the Germany of the 1930s the phrase "National Socialism" was used to describe the policies of an organisation which, far from being either nationalist or

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socialist, was committed to the establishment of a savage global hegemony. Its policy of obliterating an entire race in the interests of genetic purity was euphemistically described as "the final solution to the Jewish problem"; and the slogan over the gates of one of its principal concentration camps—ARBEIT MACHT FREI—was as brutally cynical as those on the walls of the Ministry of Truth.

Those who might be disposed to believe that Newspeak was no more than an invention of a political novelist's fertile imagination should study *Political Terms—A Short Guide*, published in 1982 by the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow. Some of the flavour of its approach to language may be judged by one of its definitions:

> ARMS RACE: *arms manufacture on an ever-increasing scale carried out by aggressive circles of imperialist states.*

Or by its sole examples under the heading of AGGRESSION—"the United States' war against the Vietnamese people and Israel's actions against Arab States."

THE ABUSE OF LANGUAGE for the purpose of creating confusion in receptive minds has already assumed significant proportions in our own society. It seems to be a matter for little concern that armed terrorists seeking to overthrow a legitimate government by organised violence can be described as "freedom fighters"; that men who kill innocent people at minimal risk to themselves are dignified with the grand description of "urban guerrillas"; or that the torture and murder by terrorists of soldiers and policemen can be referred to in the press as "interrogation . . . trial . . . execution." Nor is there any longer much disposition to protest when the forces of law and order in a parliamentary democracy are described as "agents of state violence"; or when the press and broadcasting organisations tolerate and even encourage language which is not only ungrammatical and illiterate, but also ugly, brutal and demotic.

It must be conceded that this semantic vandalism is not the monopoly of one side of the controversy. "Limited nuclear war" is itself a kind of Newspeak, since it puts into acceptable language a contingency which would involve the violent deaths of millions of people; and it is really unnecessary for those who advocate, for whatever good reasons, the deployment of American Cruise missiles in Europe to conceal their policies under the euphemistic description of "theatre force modernisation." The corruption of our language is already sufficiently well advanced.

It is in this context that the kidnapping of the word "peace" by a motley collection of protest movements has to be considered. It requires no more than a moment of reflection to recognise that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has no more right to monopolise the word "peace" than the British Legion or the Girl Guides. It is reasonable to assume that the avoidance of war and the preservation of peace are aspirations shared by most reasonable and intelligent human beings. Very few people actually enjoy killing or maiming other people; the minority of psychopaths who do are usually to be found in the proliferation of terrorist organisations which now infest the free world. For most people war is an unmitigated evil—wasteful, cruel, destructive. A debate about nuclear weapons is, or should be, a debate about the most effective way of achieving peace with freedom and security. It is likely to be entirely abortive if, in its early stages, one side is allowed blandly to describe itself as "the peace movement", implying the simple-minded corollary that those who disagree with it must be in favour of war.

It is not only in this specified abuse of language that the protest movements demonstrate their familiarity with the dialectics of totalitarianism. Since the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament first emerged in Britain in the 1950s there has been one central aim at the heart of its policies—the abandonment by the United Kingdom of its nuclear weapons—in other words, unilateral nuclear disarmament. Recently, under the influence of some of its more pragmatic and flexible ideologists, the movement has come to realise that the pure doctrine of unilateralism appeals to only a small minority. A little cosmetic obfuscation has therefore become necessary. It has taken the form of the cosy proposition that there is really "no difference" between unilateralism and multilateralism—or, as one of CND's leaders put it recently in a public debate, "We are all in favour of multilateral disarmament—it is just that we want to achieve it in a different way. . . ."

IT IS IMPORTANT that this piece of Newspeak should be exposed before it passes into the currency of received wisdom. Unilateral nuclear disarmament means the renunciation by this country of its nuclear weapons, *without any corresponding*

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action by any other country. It may, of course, be proposed in the hope that "others" will follow "our example"; but, if it has any meaning at all, unilateralism means that the government of the United Kingdom is required to take the risk involved in an act of disarmament which imposes no obligation, and provides no incentive, for its potential enemies to take reciprocal measures. Multilateral disarmament, on the other hand, means negotiated reduction or abandonment of weapons and armed forces by all countries concerned, in a phased and controlled programme, subject to international verification and inspection. Unilateralism and multilateralism are, therefore, contradictory and mutually exclusive concepts. To pretend otherwise, as some of the leaders of the protest movements do, is to use the corruption of language for the purpose of practising a fundamental deception upon the people of the country.

THERE IS ANOTHER CHARGE of this kind which can legitimately be levelled at the unilateralist movement. Apart from using language selectively and whimsically, it systematically misrepresents the views of other people. The most offensive example of this is the constant quotation, out of context, of passages from Lord Mountbatten's speech at Strasbourg in 1979, obviously in an attempt to suggest that he was a supporter of unilateral disarmament. In fact, Lord Mountbatten (like Lord Zuckerman and Lord Carver, two other favourite sources of CND quotations) rejected the unilateralist case. Lord Mountbatten's position was, indeed, that of the classic multilateralist. In part of the Strasbourg speech which is never quoted by the "peace" people he said:

> *"To begin with, we are most likely to preserve the peace if there is a military balance of strength between East and West. The real need is for both sides to replace the attempts to maintain a balance through ever-increasing and ever more costly nuclear armaments by a balance based on mutual restraint. Better still, by a reduction of nuclear armaments I believe it should be possible to achieve greater security at a lower level of military confrontation."*

Only in an Orwellian world could the speech from which that extract is taken be used as unilateralist propaganda.

It is important, therefore, to be on guard against the insidious effects of Newspeak and to recognise that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is not a spontaneous movement of like-minded idealists, motivated only by a desire for peace, disarmament, or liberation from the threat of nuclear annihilation. It obviously includes such persons, but they, and those who may be tempted to join them, need to understand that CND and the "peace movements" of which it is the centre are political organisations with identifiable political aims.

2. *The Leadership of the CND*

IT IS NOT unreasonable to judge a political movement by its leaders; and it is important for those who are not yet convinced of the political nature of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to know something about the personalities who have shaped the movement and who are responsible for its policies and direction.

A number of those who are, or have been, influentially involved in the formation of the movement's policies make no secret of their political affiliations. Professor Michael Pentz, Vice-Chairman of CND, who is Dean of the Faculty of Science at the Open University, has stood as a Communist Party candidate at local elections; Professor Pentz, who polled nearly 1,200 votes for the Vice-Chairmanship out of 1,300 delegates to the 1982 CND conference, has close links with the British Peace Assembly, the British arm of the Soviet front organisation, the World Peace Council, and the World Federation of Scientific Workers, another Soviet front organisation. Against this background, it is interesting to note that the CND's conference broadsheet pointed out on 28 November 1982 that Professor Pentz would be in 1983 "very much a decision-maker." Dr John Cox, who has been a leading member of CND since the early 1960s, and was Chairman from 1971–77, has been a prominent member of the Communist Party for nearly thirty years; and in an article published in the *Morning Star* (16 April 1977) he delivered himself of the memorable comment that "even if one accepts all the figures coming from Western sources, by no stretch of the imagination can one claim that Soviet arms spending exceeds that, or even approaches that of its political enemies. . . ."

Among the women in the leadership, Sally Davison, CND's paid national organiser from 1979 to 1981 and until recently an elected member of its National Council, is an active member of the Communist Party and works on the staff of its journal

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Marxism Today. Possibly the most influential woman in the formation of CND policy, Betty England, joined the executive committee of the Communist Party in the 1930s and was an active unilateralist for 20 years. Shortly before she died (1981) she published a definitive pamphlet on CND policy. In it she wrote "CND supporters have a job to do, to see that the arguments for British unilateral nuclear disarmament are carried into every party and trade union branch and on to every shop floor. . . ." Whatever else may be said about Betty England, she obviously had no time for Newspeak or the convenient blurring of the difference between the words unilateral and multilateral. She, unlike some of CND's contemporary apologists, clearly endorsed the Constitution of the Campaign:

> *"The aim of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is the unilateral abandonment by Britain of nuclear weapons, nuclear bases and nuclear alliances as a prerequisite for a foreign policy which has the worldwide abolition of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, leading to general and complete disarmament as its prime objective."* (Section A, clause 1)

Other leaders of CND have less easily identifiable political affiliations. Jo Richardson, as a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, has been one of the key figures in converting the Party to official acceptance of the unilateralist position. Joan Ruddock, the Chairman (or, as she prefers to be described, "Chairperson") of CND who claims to be committed to a non-party position for CND, belongs to the Labour Party and was at one time a member of its left-wing Labour Co-Ordinating Committee. Alasdair Beal, a Labour Party trade-unionist, is allegedly anxious to bring CND's message to Young Conservatives; and Lord (Hugh) Jenkins of Putney, former Chairman of the National Council of CND, and now its remarkably persistent spokesman in the House of Lords, was once Minister for the Arts in a Labour Government, a pedigree which might be regarded, at first sight, as one of almost stupefying respectability.

THE TWO MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES in the unilateralist movement are even more difficult to classify. Monsignor Bruce Kent, the General Secretary of CND, is a Roman Catholic priest and one-time private secretary to the Archbishop of Westminster. Behind this canonical front, however, there resides a radical activist of considerable versatility. His religious philosophy may be summed up in his remark that "the Churches are handicapped by profound anti-communist feeling . . . at variance with Christian teaching." It seems that Mgr Kent dissents from the views of both Karl Marx and the Catholic Church in that he believes Christianity to be compatible with Marxism. In a somewhat delphic utterance at a meeting of the World Disarmament Campaign in 1980, Mgr Kent announced that "we are not working on the Bible, *Das Kapital* or Magna Carta." Whatever this remarkable statement might mean, it is interesting that an Englishman who is also a Roman Catholic priest should be so even-handed as between Magna Carta and the Bible on the one hand, and the Marxist dogma on the other. Mgr Kent's alliance with the communists in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament seems, furthermore, to be at odds with the teachings of his Church in at least one important respect—the encyclical which warns Roman Catholics that "nobody who desires to save Christian civilisation from extinction should render it [atheistic communism] assistance in any enterprise whatever. . . ."

The man now generally recognised, however, as the intellectual mainspring of the current unilateralist resurgence (he was elected at the top of the list of the National Council at the 1982 CND Conference) is Edward Thompson, a Marxist historian sometimes referred to, against his expressed wish, as "Professor" Thompson. Mr Thompson is a man of impressive academic reputation, with a highly developed talent for communication and a generous endowment of that personal magnetism sometimes referred to as "charisma" (quite inappropriately in Mr Thompson's case, since *charisma* is a favour especially vouchsafed by God). E. P. Thompson has come late into the jungle of military and strategic debate, a circumstance which does not inhibit him from pronouncing authoritatively upon matters with which he is imperfectly acquainted. In a television programme in September 1980, for example, he delivered a confident lecture on tanks, based on his experience in World

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War II, in which he displayed a truly academic innocence about the nature of modern warfare.

Thompson's appeal, especially to the young, lies in unshakeable moral certitude combined with a serene consciousness of intellectual superiority. He is rarely even prepared to concede that those who disagree with him might simply be confused or mistaken. When he writes that arguments in favour of the policy of deterrence "stink of mendacious rhetric" he is simply articulating the belief, now scarcely questioned among unilateralists, that those who dissent from their views are liars and criminals, endorsing weapons and policies which are "morally imbecilic" or "outrages against humanity." Furthermore, Mr Thompson, although he left the British Communist Party in 1956, is still troubled by no intellectual doubts when it comes to apportioning blame for the uncertain state of the world.[1] In an article in the *New Statesman* in 1981 (entitled, in an inspired piece of Newspeak, "Freedom and the Bomb"), he wrote:

> *"The United States seems to me to be the more dangerous and provocative, and its general military and diplomatic strategies, which press around the Soviet Union with menacing bases. It is in Washington, rather than Moscow, that scenarios are dreamed up for 'theatre' wars. . . ."*

It is, as a matter of general comment, surprising that a man who has acquired some kind of academic reputation should write in this way; but what is more important is that this kind of rhetoric betrays an unusual capacity for ignoring reality. If Mr Thompson really believes that the Soviet Union does not "dream up" scenarios for theatre wars he might profitably study the exercises carried out by the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany every autumn; or, if he finds that impracticable, he might read the strategic doctrines expounded by such acknowledged Russian experts as General Milovidov, Colonel Skirdo, and, especially, Colonel Shirokov on the targeting of nuclear weapons.[2] If all else fails he might ask himself precisely how he thinks the SS-20 missiles, with an "intermediate" range of 3,000 miles, fit into Russian military planning.

THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST that ignorance of military matters should debar Mr Thompson from taking a leading part in the debate on nuclear disarmament, but simply that he should base his arguments on ground with which he is more familiar. It is true that Mr Thompson's major preoccupation hitherto has been the movement known as "European Nuclear Disarmament" (END), rather than the narrower issue of British unilateralism. END's policy includes the establishment of a nuclear-free Europe and the dismantling of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This would, however, have to begin by unilateral measures of disarmament in the West, for (as Mr Thompson concedes, with a nice touch of understatement, in his celebrated essay *Protest and Survive*):

> *"In Eastern Europe . . . only a few courageous dissidents will, in the first place, be able to take an open part in our common work."*

Eventually, however, Mr Thompson envisages a situation in which the military and political establishments of both the Soviet Union and the United States "would have to be destabilised from below . . . by citizens acting in quite new political ways . . . ." It is not difficult to prophesy in which of the two countries such "political ways" would have more chance of success.

It is not illegal, or even improper, for E. P. Thompson, or any of his colleagues in the leadership of the unilateralist movement, to disseminate political views of the kind which they hold. It is, however, important to understand that behind the colourful banners, the high-minded passion, and the touching camaraderie of the anti-nuclear movement lies a coherent and dedicated political organisation, led by skilled political activists. The nature of that organisation is a matter of great importance to the people of this country, and to the West as a whole.

3. *The Political Face of Unilateralism*

IT IS, therefore, important to recognise clearly the political and ideological basis of the Cam-

[1] See especially Leszek Kolakowski's open letter to E. P. Thompson, "My Correct Views on Everything", ENCOUNTER, June 1975.

[2] General A. S. Milovidov (ed.), *The Philosophical Heritage of V. I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War* (Moscow, 1972), No. 5 in the series *Soviet Military Thought* (Washington, 1974); Colonel M. P. Skirdo, *The People, The Army, The Commander, Soviet Military Affairs*, No. 14 (1978); Colonel M. Shirokov, "Military Geography at the Present Stage", *Voyennaya Mysl* (No. 11, 1966). Cf. also Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky, *Soviet Military Strategy* (New York, 1968); Joseph D. Douglass, Jr, and Amoretta M. Hoeber, *Conventional War and Escalation* (New York, 1982); Joseph D. Douglass, Jr, *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe* (New York, 1980), Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics* (Boulder, Colorado, 1982), *Soviet Military Encyclopaedia* (Moscow, 1975–82).

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paign for Nuclear Disarmament and the disparate protest movements which are beginning to coagulate around it.

They are not *peace* movements; nor are their aims entirely circumscribed by a concern for arms control or disarmament. They are political organisations of the Left, giving protective coloration and bogus respectability to substantial numbers of people for whom the emotional appeal of peace and disarmament is merely an instrument for the prosecution of more comprehensive political aims, and who are prepared to exploit the genuine fears of their fellow men and women in order to achieve them.

It is, of course, frequently argued that by far the great majority of the members of CND and its allied organisations are sincere, idealistic men and women with no ulterior political motives, driven only by a passionate desire for a world at peace. The sad fact is that many of them are the dupes of unscrupulous political manipulators; and many others are bigots who are persuaded that there is a "quick fix" for the intricate problems of national defence, international security, East–West arms control, and general disarmament.

To use this kind of language is to invite cries of outrage from the protest movements; and perhaps even of pained surprise from those who dissent from their beliefs. The conventional wisdom is that it is "counterproductive" to attempt to discredit the protest movements, and that the only respectable way to counteract their influence is to accept their basic sincerity and to meet them in the arena of intellectual debate. It is feared that any departure from this scrupulously academic prescription might be greeted with dark allusions to "Senator McCarthy", the Pavlovian reaction of the extreme Left when confronted with the possibility of critical exposure.

This self-denying ordinance seems curiously naive. In the first place, the unilateralists and their collaborators have no such inhibitions. A recent programme of lectures at a church in the City of London was described by *Peace News* as being given by "anti-disarmament figures." It was, in fact, given almost entirely by supporters of multilateral disarmament. Secondly, many of the supporters of unilateralism are quite simply impervious to reason, some on the uncomplicated basis that "My-mind-is-made-up, please-do-not-confuse-me-with-the-facts", and some because the arguments are not reconcilable with their ideological prejudices or consistent with their ultimate political aims.

It is, therefore, not enough to try to meet the protesters at the level of rational discourse—as important as that may be. It is essential also to identify the nature and aims of their organisation. In order to do this, I must digress briefly and examine another important phenomenon concerning the use of language in political intercourse.

IT HAS TO DO WITH the word *communist* as used to describe the political adherence of this or that individual.

One of the more burdensome legacies of that unattractive '50s figure, Senator Joseph McCarthy, is a curious inhibition, among people who regard themselves as decent and tolerant, against using the word *communist*, lest they should be suspected or accused of "McCarthyism." It has thus become difficult, if not impossible, to explain certain important political developments; and many people, especially the young and unsophisticated, have been deceived and manipulated by propaganda of unidentified origin. It might reasonably be argued that "a communist", rather like an elephant, although difficult to describe, is extremely easy to recognise. It is, however, not quite as simple as it may seem. It is, it appears, permissible to describe someone as a monetarist, a social democrat, or even a socialist, without fear of legal retribution. An article in a newspaper, or an interview on a television programme may have its author or its subject correctly identified as "a Conservative MP" or a "Republican Senator." It is the view, however, of at least one leader of the extreme Left in this country, that to describe him as "a communist" would be defamatory, and possibly actionable at law. Leaving aside the interesting implications of this attitude in terms of its reflection on the nature of communism, it seems that, in order safely to describe someone as a communist in the United Kingdom, it is necessary first to establish that he is a fully paid-up member of the British Communist Party. By this criterion, of course, it would not have been permissible to describe either Kim Philby or Klaus Fuchs as "communists."

Observing semantic restrictions of a similar kind, it would be difficult to argue that the so-called "Peace Movements" are infiltrated, manipulated, or dominated by communists of one or another Marxist-Leninist persuasion. Yet to accept this kind of linguistic strait-jacket is to allow the protesters to make up the rules while the game is in progress. It is not mandatory that those of us who regard ourselves as their opponents should observe

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their rules. It is possible without causing offence or confusion to describe someone as a Christian whether he is Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist or Seventh Day Adventist. Similarly, anyone who pursues the aim of totalitarian socialism, whether the model is that of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, or Trotsky, may reasonably and legitimately be described as a communist.

BY THIS STANDARD, the present leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is worth a closer look. It emerges that there are at least eight communists in the higher echelons, including at least five on the National Council and at least three full-time officials; the CND magazine *Sanity* (another blatant example of Newspeak) has a communist as one of its editors and another on its editorial committee. This is nothing new—there has been a substantial communist influence in the CND since very soon after its inception in 1958. The organisation was at first an amalgam of various "peace movements" without any obviously motivating political philosophy. In the 1960s it attracted support from a broad spectrum of British society; but its growth coincided with the rise of the Trotskyist movement, whose leaders were quick to recognise its potential value. The embryonic revolutionary parties (later to emerge as the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Revolutionary Party) were early supporters of CND. Indeed in 1961 the annual conference of the Communist Party of Great Britain suspended its Easter Monday session to join the Aldermaston March (then the annual set-piece of CND) as it arrived in Trafalgar Square. Since then the CPGB has always been active in the movement. At various times it has provided the Chairman, the National Organiser, and the Press Officer of CND, and it has worked tirelessly to promote unilateralism in the trade-union movement.

Confronted with evidence of its communist associations, the leaders of CND adopt the "broad church" attitude. They argue that if communists share their aims in the field of disarmament, they are welcome allies, and that, in any case, the vast majority of the members and supporters of CND have no communist affiliations of any kind. This, apart from being true (or perhaps *because* it is true), is a persuasive argument. In November 1981, Mgr Bruce Kent (the General Secretary of CND) went, perhaps unwisely, a little further. "I have yet", he said, "to meet anyone in CND who is an uncritical supporter of the Soviet position. . . ." It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Mgr Kent does not get out and about his troops very much. He went on to admit the presence of the Socialist Workers Party within the CND. "They are very concerned", he said, "about the potential of involving workers' forces within the campaign. But they have shown they are prepared to work with the church groups within our movement. . . ." Now Mgr Kent must be aware that one of the distinguishing characteristics of international communism, derived from the precepts of Marx and Lenin, is that its adherents are prepared to work with *anyone* in the single-minded pursuit of their political aims. As Lenin said,

> *"We must be able to agree to any sacrifice, and even if need be resort to all sorts of tricks, slyness, illegal methods, evasion and concealment of truth, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them and to carry on Communist work at all costs."*
>
> COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. 31, p. 37

If Mgr Kent believed that communists working inside the "peace movements" were inspired by different motives from communists working in trade unions, he would be naive indeed; and that he certainly is not.

For those of Mgr Kent's followers who take his reassurances at their face value there are some very prudent prescriptions concerning devils and long spoons; and it is interesting to note that the five communists on the elected National Council of CND make up about 25% of the Council's total elected membership, a figure which should be compared with the 0.5% of the British electorate who vote communist at general elections. It must surely be reasonable to conclude, on the basis of this evidence, that communist influence in CND is disproportionately high.

FURTHERMORE, IT CANNOT be entirely coincidental that the "disarmament" programme of the British Communist Party and that of CND are remarkably similar, not only in general philosophy (which would not be entirely surprising) but in their priorities and phraseology.

A CND document published in 1979 had, as its first six priorities, the abandonment of Britain's strategic nuclear forces; the closure of American and NATO bases in the United Kingdom; the reduction of the defence budget and the diversion of resources

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to social services; redeployment of workers from military production; and the end of the sale of British arms abroad, especially to countries "where human rights are violated and torture used. . . ." Connoisseurs of these matters may care to compare this manifesto with the policy document adopted by the Communist Party Executive Committee in August 1981. Paragraphs 190 and 200 set out a series of policy aims which are, with one exception, identical in content and in order of priority with those of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The exception itself is interesting: in place of CND's demand for "redeployment of workers", the Communist Party called for Britain's withdrawal from NATO.

What is even more significant than the almost total community of purpose between CND and the Communist Party is the fact that this general programme has now been adopted almost in its entirety by the British Labour Party. As *The Times* pointed out in a leading article (29 November 1982), it is no accident that CND's resurgence has coincided with a period of Labour opposition. When they are not burdened with the responsibilities of government, Labour politicians are not constrained by such inconvenient imperatives as the disciplines of an alliance or the complicated problems of managing national security. Nuclear disarmament is seen—not only by the party's more egregious Stalinists, but by some of its less ideological opportunists as well—as a powerful rallying point for the Left, otherwise fragmented, confused, and demoralised. It is not surprising that the Communist Party of Great Britain is now claiming, in collaboration with CND, to have manoeuvred the Labour Party into a position which, if it came back to power, would be clearly inconsistent with British membership of NATO.

The Times (26 November 1982) reported that "CND itself, according to . . . its General Secretary, now has 250,000 members throughout the United Kingdom, of whom about 15,000 are communists, as its critics are quick to point out, but of whom 20,000 are Quakers. . . ." This raises a number of interesting points. In the first place, the membership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is certainly not greater than 50,000; the figure of 250,000 is therefore deliberately misleading, since it obviously includes allied "peace movements" of multifarious kinds. Secondly, it evidently implies that each Quaker neutralises the influence of each communist, a proposition which demands a positively Orwellian suspension of disbelief. Finally, if Mgr Kent's use of the word "communist" signifies membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, his statistics are illuminating. As the CPGB has no more than 18,000 card-carrying members, it appears that nearly 85% of them are to be found in the ranks of his movement.

It really is pointless for Mgr Kent to prattle about the Quakers who are alleged to balance the communists in the upper reaches of the CND, or for earnest members of the rank-and-file to protest that "their" movement is apolitical and concentrated upon a single issue. There are, nowadays, few (if any) "single-issue" protest movements. The columns of unilateralist protesters carry banners which proclaim the virtues of every radical cause from Homosexual Rights to Anti-Vivisection. The "peace women" of Greenham Common, who so outraged the local inhabitants in 1982 with their eccentric standards of hygiene (and contempt for their vaunted environmental conservation), seem to be confused not only between unilateralism and the problem of Cruise missiles, but also between disarmament and "women's liberation" (to the extent that they made consummate asses of themselves by designating strictly segregated areas in which male unilateralists were *allowed* to "demonstrate"). The mysterious organisation known as "Tories against Cruise and Trident" (TACT) lost some of its ecumenical magic at the last CND conference when one of its members, speaking from the rostrum, reacted to somewhat unsympathetic heckling by protesting that he was, after all, a socialist. He was, also, a member of CND's full-time staff, which might provide a clue about the origins of TACT—none of whose members are in fact required to belong to the Conservative Party.

THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is, as *The Times* has suggested, a left-wing political organisation; and the possibility that large numbers of its adherents do not know that it is, does nothing to alter the fact. Edward Thompson did not attempt to conceal his belief that the popular movement towards nuclear disarmament is "an integral part of a general effort to advance socialism"; and Mr Jon Bloomfield, one of the leading communists in CND, has written, in *Marxism Today* (1979):

> *"To the extent that mass popular politics remain characteristic of the peace movement, so the Left itself will benefit from the movement's advance."*

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It is, therefore, irrelevant for CND to proclaim passionately that it is not a communist organisation, or that it receives no financial aid from international communism. It is, none the less, significant that Mgr Kent, who habitually insists that the accounts of the movement are open for inspection, seems strangely reluctant to publish them.

The suggestion that CND is "Moscow-inspired" or a "Communist front" comes only from a minority of its more paranoid opponents. But, as an American psychiatrist has pointed out, even paranoids can have real enemies. The myth of "Kremlin gold" pouring into the CND's premises in Goodwin Street is a straw man, carefully constructed to allow the unilateralists to knock it down with passionate cries of "*Smear!*" and, inevitably, "*McCarthyism!*" These protestations conceal the real fact, which is that the unilateralist movement in Britain is a political organisation of the Left; there is scarcely a member of the CND hierarchy who is not, by any generally accepted criterion, of the extremist Left; and like all such organisations it is being, and will continue to be, exploited to its full potential by the Soviet Union.

4. *The Soviet Union & the Peace Movements*

THE TRUE ROLE of the Soviet Union in the encouragement and exploitation of "peace movements" is more subtle and effective than is suggested by some of the more simple-minded models of Russian conspiracy. The "struggle for peace", as Vladimir Bukovsky has pointed out in his incisive pamphlet, *The Peace Movement and the Soviet Union* (1981), has always been a cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy. It is, however, a Newspeak peace, as memorably defined by Lenin: "As an ultimate objective, peace simply means Communist world control. . . ."[3]

Frank Chapple, one of the relatively small minority of trade union leaders in Britain to have understood clearly what is happening, stated the case uncompromisingly in an article (*Reader's Digest*, April 1982) entitled "The False Promise of Nuclear Peace":

> *". . . reactivated 'peace' groups now mushrooming around Europe have either been created or are being manipulated by pro-Soviet apologists in one of the most brilliantly orchestrated propaganda offensives . . . co-ordinated by the World Peace Council in Helsinki and masterminded by the Kremlin. . . . Their goal: to cajole and frighten Western Europeans down a road leading from unilateral disarmament to isolationism and ultimate defencelessness against political aggression."*

This is a cogent summary of the Russian programme of active measures designed to exploit the unilateralist movement in the West.

The Soviet Union uses the term "active measures" to describe a broad range of operations (some clandestine) designed to promote its foreign policy aims. Active measures include "disinformation" (not, incidentally, an American neologism but a direct translation from the Russian); manipulation of the foreign press; and the use of "front organisations" to expand Soviet political influence. Active measures are the responsibility principally of the *KGB* and the Information Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Front organisations are ostensibly independent, but are in fact rigidly controlled—usually by the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

In the context of the unilateralist movement the relevant front organisation is the World Peace Council, which provides an umbrella organisation for a number of pro-Communist "peace movements" from various countries. The WPC has been successful in attracting the support of many pacifists and left-wing activists, some of whom are not fully aware of the extent to which it is controlled from Moscow. One of the Vice-Presidents of the WPC is Mr James Lamond, the Labour MP. Gordon Schaffer and Alex Kitson, two other members of the Labour Party, serve on the Presidential Committee, and the secretary is Frank Swift, a British Communist. It is, perhaps, worth noting that the WPC and its British arm both appeared on the *Proscribed Organisations List* of the Labour Party until 1973.

The 1983 programme of the World Peace Council calls for a number of activities which make illuminating reading for those who follow the progress

[3] As a parenthetical observation, one of the more curious aspects of the contemporary scene is that unilateralists not only reject what their opponents say about Soviet intentions, they also refuse to believe what the Russians say themselves.

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of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament:

> *"Further intensification of actions against the dangers of nuclear war and the deployment of new US weapons of mass destruction in Western Europe. . . ."*
>
> *"National events (demonstrations, seminars, colloquia etc) with international participation against nuclear arms build-up and the deployment of US missiles in Europe. . . ."*
>
> *"International meetings of mayors and elected representatives and of peace forces from towns and regions where new US nuclear missiles are to be deployed. . . ."*

The CND cannot really be surprised if this is regarded as a blueprint for Greenham Common, High Wycombe, and the ludicrous "nuclear-free zones" of our left-wing dominated local councils thoughout England and Scotland and Wales. As the Soviet monthly journal *International Affairs* noted with undisguised admiration (in its issue of March 1982), 130 municipalities in Britain have now been proclaimed "nuclear-free zones." It is presumably safe to assume that these progressive localities no longer figure on the lists of Soviet missile targets.

Whatever protestations of innocence may be made by Mgr Bruce Kent, the World Peace Council and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament are by no means unconnected. The WPC's main instrument in Britain was originally the British Peace Committee. It defined its aims, after ritual genuflexions in the direction of "peace", as the banning of foreign bases, and unilateral disarmament in Britain. The main link between the WPC and this country, however, is another front organisation, the British Peace Assembly. Among the British political figures who have been associated with this body are Frank Allaun, a prominent unilateralist; Michael Pentz, elected Vice-Chairman of CND for the second time in 1982; and Jo Richardson, who has been a CND activist since the foundation of the campaign. It would, therefore, be strange indeed if the policies of the WPC, which are designed specially to promote the interests of Soviet foreign policy, were not reflected in the activities of CND.

THE MOST PERSISTENT and effective Russian campaign has been that mounted against the plan to station ground-launched Cruise missiles at American bases in West Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The immediate Soviet reaction to the decision to implement this plan was to condemn it as an "intensification of the arms race" and a "threat to *détente*." A major propaganda campaign was then initiated against targets in Western Europe, suggesting that the United States was planning to use its European allies as a "nuclear hostage"—a demagogic phrase which has re-emerged persistently in the anti-Cruise-missile demonstrations at Greenham Common and elsewhere.

The Peacemonger's Nietzsche, or "Going Under"

GIVEN the high proportion of moralising rhetoric in the Peace Movement and its deficit in reasonable analysis, it is only understandable that it tries, at times desperately, to acquire some semblance of intellectual respectability.

Thus, the left-wing "Nation" (editor: Victor Navasky) devotes a full column to quoting "FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE ON DISARMAMENT." *Evidently the sage of Sils Maria has been retrospectively recruited into the movement.*

But he too, alas, was strong on romantic rhetoric and verbal excess and short on political persuasiveness. The long quotation from Nietzsche which "The Nation" bravely offers is surely a boomerang, offering as it does as the best hope for peace only an apocalyptic vision of "going under"!

> **"The doctrine of the army as a means of self-defense must be as thoroughly renounced as the desire for conquest. And there will come, perhaps, a great day, on which a people . . . cries out of its own free will: 'we shatter the sword'—and dismantles its entire armed forces to their foundations. To make oneself defenseless, while one was the most defensible—that is the means to real peace, which must always rest on a peaceful disposition. The so-called armed peace, as it prevails in every country at present, is that disquieted disposition which trusts neither itself nor its neighbour and, half from hatred, half from fear, will not lay down its arms.**
>
> **"Better to go under than to hate and fear, and far better to go under than to make oneself hate and fear—this must also become the highest maxim of individual sovereign society! . . . The tree of military glory can only be destroyed at a single blow, by one stroke of lightning. . . ."**
>
> *The Nation* (N.Y.), 13 March 1982, p. 293

IT IS *an arguable proposition that this message is, in the last analysis, the main thrust of the "peace movement": defencelessness as a prelude to going under.*

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One of the side effects of the intensive Soviet exploitation of "peace movements" has been to inject into them a massive element of anti-Americanism. The strident demands for the removal of American bases have developed into a bitter and often vicious hostility against anything American. This is depressing, but not altogether surprising. The Russian "disinformation programme" is reinforced by a tendency in the British press to affect an attitude of magisterial objectivity as between the free world and the totalitarian dictatorship which threatens it. The confused rhetoric which has emerged has anaesthetised the critical faculty of an entire generation, so that it has become incapable of deciding whether it is on the side of the fireman or the fire. The next step in this demoralised flight from reason is to suggest that if there is a threat to world peace, it comes not from an aggressive and expansionist Soviet Union but (as *Tass* and Edward Thompson seem to believe) from the power-mad United States of America and its trigger-happy President. Writing recently in one of our more prestigious national newspapers, a television critic reviewing a BBC programme by Mr Jonathan Dimbleby declared that it had demonstrated that "the real threat to world peace comes not from the Kremlin, but from the man in the cowboy suit."

Thus we arrive at a collective perception which must be a source of great pleasure to the International Department of the Central Committee in Moscow. The CND, whether consciously or not, is creating the impression that a dangerous nuclear crisis is imminent, and that most (if not all) of the blame for it lies with the United States of America. It has become acceptable in some progressive circles, and mandatory in others, to characterise Americans as at best naive and dangerous militarists, and at worst bloodthirsty and aggressive warmongers—propping up unsavoury dictatorships, provoking and perpetuating a mad arms race, while attempting to bully their more sophisticated but overawed European allies into accepting a view of the world in which the only enemy is Communism and the only way to defeat it is by bigger and better nuclear weapons.

It is, of course, essential to keep the connection between the Soviet Union and the "peace movements" in a reasonable perspective. Those who accuse CND of being "financed by the Russians" are firing at the wrong target. The important fact is that the unilateralist movement is increasingly anti-American; that it seeks to bring about unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain; that it wants to remove American bases from the United Kingdom and begin dismantling the NATO alliance; and that it opposes the introduction of Cruise missiles into Europe. All these are fundamental principles of Soviet foreign policy.

This may, of course, be a coincidence. It may be nothing to do with the World Peace Council or its instrument the British Peace Assembly; it may owe nothing to the activities of *Tass* or the *KGB*. But the CND can scarcely complain if it is pointed out that, consciously or not, it is diligently promoting the aims of Russian foreign policy. It is not necessary to receive payment to be guilty of damaging the national interest and the security of Western Europe.

5. *The Logical Consequences of Unilateralism*

IS IT ENOUGH to demonstrate that CND has been shaped into a political organisation by left-wing activists, that its leadership and its membership have a disproportionately high communist representation, or that its programme tends to reinforce the foreign policy of the Soviet Union?

No; it is necessary also to provide a coherent refutation of its policies, which lead to weakness, neutralism, and despair. The most useful point of departure for this is to follow the unilateralist argument to its logical conclusion—an exercise which has already been bravely, if briefly, undertaken in *European Security: the Case Against Unilateral Disarmament*. This pamphlet—published by the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding and signed by a group of Labour politicians including Michael Stewart (former Foreign Secretary), Fred Peart (former Minister in Harold Wilson's cabinet), and Frank Chapple (at present Chairman of the Trades Union Council)—points out that CND policy as reflected in the resolutions passed at the Labour Party Conference requires not only that Britain should abandon its nuclear deterrent, but also that it should not take part in any system of defence involving the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Since CND does not suggest that the United States should unilaterally abandon its nuclear striking force (nor, in any case, is there any prospect of this happening), NATO is, and is likely to remain, committed to a "system of defence involving the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons." The unilateralist programme, therefore, carries with it

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the clear implication of withdrawal from NATO. There are, it is true, a number of members of CND who are reluctant to accept this interpretation of unilateralism, and who point out that there are many European countries which are members of NATO but do not possess nuclear weapons. They clearly do not know, or choose to ignore, the fact that all these countries are nevertheless prepared to accept (some in peacetime, some only in case of war) American nuclear bases on their territory. The CND programme, on the other hand, demands the removal of these bases.

It is evident, therefore, that whatever shades of interpretation may exist within the unilateralist movement, the policies of CND and the Labour Party (and, to a large extent, of the Liberal Party as well) involve the withdrawal of Britain from NATO. Of course, this could, theoretically, involve withdrawing only from the integrated military structure, as France has done, while remaining a member of the Atlantic Alliance. This would, presumably, require some agile intellectual gymnastics on the part of the unilateralists, since the Alliance itself is a system which relies upon nuclear deterrence for its collective security. However, assuming that this inconvenient consideration can be brushed aside, it is important to point out that France links its status outside the integrated military structure of the Alliance with the maintenance of the *force de frappe*, an independent nuclear striking force of the very kind which CND is now attempting to eliminate in the United Kingdom. Furthermore a socialist French government has recently decided to devote substantial resources to strengthening its deterrent, and in his recent speech to the Bonn *Bundestag*, President Mitterrand strongly urged the Germans, in order to help preserve the peace in Europe, to accept the reinforced American deterrent. Is it conceivable that French socialists know something which British socialists do not?

THE ONLY REASONABLE CONCLUSION is that unilateralism leads inevitably to neutralism. This is, indeed a consummation enthusiastically endorsed by a great majority of "peace" people who believe, like E. P. Thompson, that there is little to choose between the Russians and the Americans and that, of the two, the Americans are marginally less admirable. These somewhat confused individuals point to the example of "neutralism" presented by Sweden and Switzerland, thus demonstrating an imperfect grasp of the logic of what they are suggesting. Sweden and Switzerland are able to enjoy the luxury of neutrality almost entirely because they exist as islands in the midst of a powerful and cohesive Western alliance of democratic nations. If that alliance were to disintegrate (which is the inevitable consequence of unilateralist policies) the whole of Western Europe would degenerate into a collection of "neutral" nation-states, whose model is more likely to be that of Finland than Sweden or Switzerland.

The Soviet Union will, at that point, have achieved one of its principal foreign policy aims—the "Finlandisation" of Western Europe. The Finns, understandably, resent the use of this term in political argument, but its significance is unmistakable. It means, quite simply, that the nations of Western Europe, deprived of their collective security, would rely for their continued existence entirely upon the benevolent intentions of the Soviet Union. It may be possible for Edward Thompson and Bruce Kent to believe in the goodwill of this powerful dictatorship, and even to persuade others to agree with them. There will, however, always be those with memories of Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and, more recently, of Poland and Afghanistan, who will not share their optimism.

MUCH OF THE DANGEROUS COMPLACENCY about Russian intentions derives from a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of military power. It is a failure of intellectual analysis which repeatedly emerges in the unilateralist argument. Two of the most recent examples occurred in Enoch Powell's "Brunel Discourse" (at Bristol University in November 1982) and in *The Church and The Bomb* (the report of a working party under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Salisbury). Mr Powell's elaborately logical analysis contained the following significant, if somewhat obscurely worded, passage:

> *"First, Russia does not want to occupy Western Europe. Second, Russia's assumption is that to do so, or attempt to do so, would almost certainly involve her in a long and exacting war, which even if she could not lose it, she would, on historical precedent, be in danger of not winning, and Russia does not desire such a war."*

Similarly on p. 24 of the Bishop of Salisbury's report there appears the confident statement that:

> *"... the Russians do not want war; they recognise that war is not now a viable instrument of Soviet foreign policy."*

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An immediate reaction to these definitive declarations is one of surprise that Mr Powell and the Bishop of Salisbury have acquired a knowledge of Russian intentions for which generations of statesmen, generals, strategic analysts, and intelligence organisations have searched in vain. A second reflection is that there must be quite a number of people in Afghanistan who will be perplexed at the discovery that "war is not now a viable instrument of Soviet foreign policy. . . ." Furthermore, it has evidently not occurred to the Bishop or to Mr Powell that they are basing their confident arguments upon assumptions which, if they prove to be wrong, will entirely (and tragically) invalidate their conclusions.

The most serious aspect of their assumptions, which lie at the heart of the unilateralist case, is that they betray a dispiriting misconception of the function of military power—and by extension of nuclear weapons, which are now an element of that power. For military forces are not designed solely, or even principally, for use in war; their very existence is an instrument of foreign policy. The Soviet Union is, demonstrably, an expansionist power; it would, naturally, prefer to achieve its foreign policy aims without open conflict. Furthermore it knows—because the Soviet political leadership *does* understand the nature of military power—that in order to achieve its aims without war, it must be able to confront a potential adversary, in any confrontation of will, with an overwhelming manifestation of force, with which it can blackmail, terrorise, and coerce. (Who can believe that the crisis in Poland would have developed as it has without the presence of massive Russian forces on its border?)

THE REAL DANGER of Soviet domination of Western Europe does not lie in an invasion of Western Germany by Russian armoured divisions—although such a possibility cannot be dismissed quite as airily as Mr Powell and the Bishop of Salisbury suggest, especially if Western conventional defences are allowed to deteriorate much further. A much more probable contingency is that the Soviet Union might achieve its aims without firing a single shot. And that will almost certainly happen if the West has abandoned the will, the military resources, the collective deterrent and defensive system with which it can resist threats and blackmail. It is for this reason that unilateral disarmament by the West poses such appalling dangers.

IT IS REASONABLE to assume that unilateralists are aware of these dangers, and that they have taken them into account in arriving at their position. There must therefore be, in their minds, some powerful arguments to offset them. The most obvious, and personal, is that advanced by Mr Auberon Waugh writing in *The Spectator* (11 December 1982). Mr Waugh, otherwise a man of acute percipience, writes quite unequivocally that ". . . the prospect of Russian domination is positively to be welcomed beside the prospect of death." This is a statement of private preference with which it would be presumptuous to quarrel; but it leaves unanswered the argument of those who would be prepared to face the prospect of death if it would save millions of others (Japanese, Chinese, Indians?) from both death *and* Russian domination.

Although the phrase "Better Red than Dead" is usually attributed to Bertrand Russell, the proposition has been more recently articulated on behalf of the unilateralists by E. P. Thompson himself, who asks rhetorically (on p. 45 of *Protest and Survive*):

> *". . . is nuclear war preferable to being overcome by the enemy? Is the death of fifteen or twenty millions and the utter destruction of the country preferable to an occupation which might offer the possibility, after some years, of resurgence and recuperation?"*

Now, in the first place, this is a false antithesis familiar to students of Marxist dialectic. The alternative to surrender is not necessarily "nuclear annihilation", provided that the West makes it clear to the Soviet Union that the price of aggression in the age of nuclear weapons is just too high for anyone (including the Red Army's General Staff) to contemplate. Moreover, even if it were true that the two courses outlined in Thompson's rhetoric were the *only* two courses open to us, the answer to his question requires much closer and more rigorous intellectual examination than he has evidently been prepared to devote to it. While he is dogmatic and frightening about the results of nuclear war, he is strangely complacent about the alternative. Before his question can be answered it is important to contemplate what that "alternative" might imply.

What E. P. Thompson blandly calls *occupation* would presumably involve the establishment of the Soviet political system in this country. This entails the denial of individual liberty in a system in which the requirements of the state are paramount. It implies the existence of a police state in which every sign of dissent is brutally repressed; in which

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political "offenders" are starved in concentration camps or subjected to "rehabilitation" in psychiatric hospitals; in which human rights are systematically denied and in which the great mass of the people live in that soulless and hopeless misery which is the distinguishing characteristic of any society attempting to elevate the moral squalor of Marxism into a political system. Yet, E. P. Thompson tells us, we might have the possibility, "after some years", of resurgence and recuperation. How many years? The Poles and the Czechs have waited some 35 years, the Baltic peoples some 45 years, the Russians themselves some 65 years. In the meantime there have been the deaths of millions and abject poverty for even more.

One of the features of totalitarian communism is that it is notoriously difficult to put into reverse. The Soviet Union has lived in its demoralising twilight for more than half-a-century. When the Czechs, the Hungarians, and the Poles—condemned to "occupation" at Yalta—made their bids for "resurgence and recuperation" they were savagely put down by Russian military force, or the threat of it. The scholarly Mr Thompson should be required to produce some evidence for his sanguine assessment of the possibility of escape from "occupation" or, if it is indeed the case, to admit openly that for him personally it would be an acceptable permanent way of life.

It is fair to say of E. P. Thompson that he has carried his idea beyond the narrow limits of British unilateralism. His own concept, that of "European Nuclear Disarmament" (END) involves the creation of a "nuclear-free zone" in Europe. In an appeal launched in April 1980, the supporters of his campaign called for the two Super-powers to withdraw all nuclear weapons from European territory.

> *"We must act together to free the entire territory of Europe, from Poland to Portugal, from nuclear weapons, air and submarine bases, and from all institutions engaged in research into, or manufacture of nuclear weapons."*

Thus, in the evangelistic idiom of Mr Thompson: "we propose to make Europe a theatre of peace."

THERE IS, OF COURSE, nothing new in the idea of a European "nuclear-free zone." It was first proposed in 1956 by Andrey Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, in the form of a prohibition of atomic weapons within both parts of Germany "and neighbouring states." This was the forerunner of the Rapacki Plan (named after its principal author, the then Polish Foreign Minister) put forward in 1957, which called for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from East and West Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Mr Thompson's proposals, which are even more ambitious, turn out on close examination to be yet another call for unilateral action by the West, since the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons to the United States (together with the abandonment of the French and British nuclear systems) would be matched by the withdrawal of the Russian SS-20s beyond the Urals, where, with their estimated range of 3,000 miles, they would still threaten every major city in Europe (with the possible exception of Lisbon). The plan for a nuclear-free Europe is as irrelevant and fatuous as a plan for a "nuclear-free" Crawley or Milton Keynes. It simply ignores the facts of geography and the realities of Russian military power.

Those unilateralists who (unlike most of their leaders) recognise the real dangers of Communist Imperialism usually fall back on another argument—namely, that, if the United Kingdom were to abandon its nuclear weapons, "others" would follow suit, and the way would be open for an end to "confrontation" and the establishment of a world of stable and peaceful "coexistence." This must surely qualify as the definitive triumph of wishful thinking, of hope over experience. The Soviet Union is governed by men of cold realism; and one of them, Mr Yuri Andropov, who might be presumed to know what he is talking about, has recently described the very idea of unilateral disarmament as "naive." The French have never shown much disposition to follow Anglo-Saxon examples, and it is significant that the reaction of their government to the uproar of the "peace movements" is to improve the effectiveness of their national nuclear deterrent. Anyone who believes that the Chinese would pay the slightest attention to some unilateral gesture in the United Kingdom is clearly living in a world of fantasy; and the idea that Israel, South Africa, India, Pakistan or Argentina (or for that matter Libya or Iraq) might change their nuclear policies in response to a "moral initiative" from London is too ludicrous even to contemplate. An elementary process of elimination leads to the conclusion that there is simply no one left to "follow our example."

THE SOBER FACT IS that "unilateral disarmament" by the United Kingdom would have absolutely no effect on the policies of other countries

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which possess, or are planning to possess, nuclear weapons. Its sole consequence would be to remove one incentive for others to disarm, since in the complicated real world of international affairs (as a realistic Pope emphasised in his 1983 New Year's Day message) concessions are made only in exchange for similar and simultaneous concessions by the other side. Or (to quote the pamphlet by Michael Stewart and his Labour Committee):

> *"Unilateralism is the enemy of multilateral agreed disarmament, just as it is the enemy of conciliation: in effect, whatever the intentions of those who preach it, it is the enemy of a real and lasting peace."*

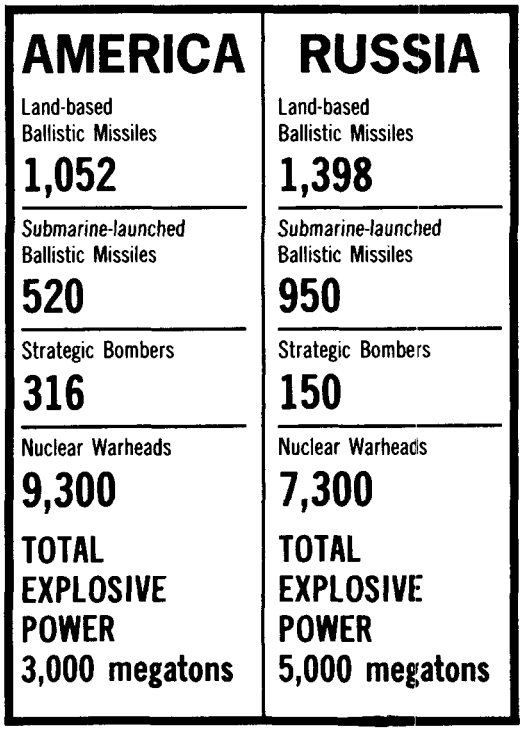
This is the same "unilateralism" which is now the official policy of the Labour Party.

THE ANALYSIS of the unilateralist case so far has been concentrated on issues of utility and expediency. There is, however, an argument which proceeds from the assumption that these factors are irrelevant, since the use of nuclear weapons is immoral and therefore indefensible on any grounds. For some this judgment extends beyond the use of nuclear weapons to the threat of their use or even to their possession, on the grounds that to possess them implies a readiness to use them.

This is a matter to which the Bishop of Salisbury and his colleagues have, somewhat naturally, devoted a great deal of attention in their report *The Church and The Bomb*. They come to the conclusion that "the cause of right cannot be upheld by fighting a nuclear war." It is not possible to dissent entirely from this conclusion, since it is difficult to argue that the use of nuclear weapons would be proportional to any good political aim which might be achieved—and "proportionality" is at the heart of the Christian concept of a just war. E. P. Thompson, with a sharp eye for the melodramatic, has identified the moral, or ethical, dilemma with another of his rhetorical questions:

> *"... are we ourselves prepared to endorse the use of such weapons against the innocent children and the aged of an enemy?"*

But Mr Thompson's question (and the conclusions of the Bishop of Salisbury's working party) contain a logical inconsistency. It is true, of course, that the use of nuclear weapons, however carefully targeted, would result in the death and mutilation of great numbers of innocent people of all ages (or, as the Newspeak of the strategists puts it, "a substantial number of collateral casualties"). It would also have incalculable genetic effects on future generations.



DAILY MAIL

IT MUST, HOWEVER, be pointed out that the ability to bring about the mass killing of innocent civilians is not an exclusive property of *nuclear* weapons. In World War II many hundreds of thousands were killed, maimed, and mutilated by high explosives and incendiary bombs. There now exist in the world stockpiles of chemical, biological, and other toxic weapons which are capable of causing death and disease on a scale comparable with any nuclear weapon. Indeed, one of the strange aberrations implicit in the arguments for Nuclear Disarmament is the suggestion that "conventional" warfare is acceptable and defensible as an instrument of national policy; only nuclear weapons are in some way "immoral" and "unacceptable." It is perhaps not surprising that a generation born after the World War II destruction of Dresden and Coventry, which has seen war only on its television screens, should have this somewhat bizarre view of "conventional" warfare. It is less understandable that it should be shared by anyone who lived through the years between 1939 and 1945.

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THE FACT IS that all war is appalling and barbaric; but it will not be abolished by attempting to remove one single weapon from the armoury of one single nation. Nor, indeed, would war be eliminated if all nuclear weapons, everywhere in the world, could be abolished.

In the first place, nuclear weapons cannot be "banned", any more than the law of gravity can be repealed. The knowledge of how to make nuclear weapons is an ineradicable ingredient of the collective human consciousness. Furthermore, if nuclear weapons *alone* were to be dismantled, the temptation to go to war would be greatly increased, since the price to be paid would ostensibly be smaller. But how could it be guaranteed that, sooner than be defeated in a conventional war, one side (or the other) would not reconstruct—and use—nuclear weapons?

It cannot be stated too often that there are perfectly respectable moral and intellectual grounds for the proposition that the invention of nuclear weapons has made the use of *any* weapons less likely. The theatrical posturing of the "Peace Movements" should not be allowed to obscure or distort the powerful arguments, in a world in which free political institutions are under constant threat, in favour of the concept of nuclear deterrence. In one phase or the other of post-War history it has consistently kept the peace between the two Superpowers.

THE ARGUMENTS SO FAR may seem to ignore one important ingredient in the "peace movement"—the element of genuine pacifism. As in the case of unilateralism, it is customary in polite circles to preface any comment on pacifism with deferential qualifications on the lines of "Of course, although I do not agree with it, I sympathise with the position of the sincere pacifist." It is, however, possible to argue that the pacifist position is selfish and indefensible, egoistic and self-destructive, well-meaning but immoral.

In the report of the Bishop of Salisbury's working party there is a recognition that, to many Christians, the pacifist view is unacceptable on the grounds that the non-violent solution which it proposes might destabilise society to such an extent that even more violence would result. Or, as Dean Inge once put it, "It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism while the wolf remains of a different opinion." The Bishop of Salisbury and his collaborators meet this argument by defining two new categories of pacifist—in an attempt to reconcile Christian ethics with the unilateralist position. They are "prudential pacifists" or "pacifists of selective objection" (who are, it seems, not pacifists of principle, but simply believe that violence, especially nuclear violence, is "essentially counterproductive").

This brand of sophistry is ingenious, but ultimately unconvincing. If the pacifist point of view were to prevail unilaterally in the West (it is very unlikely to prevail on the other side), we should be at the mercy of brute force and a hostage to any aggressor whose political ambitions included our subjugation. Attempts to obfuscate realities with Jesuitical word-play were once the subject of a magisterial rebuke administered by the Editor of *The Times* to a leader-writer who had rashly insisted that there were surely two sides to every question. "No, young man", said the Editor severely, "there are not! Some things are evil, cruel and ugly; and no amount of fine writing will make them good, kind or beautiful. . . ."

It is doubtful that, given the imperfection of human nature and behaviour, a completely peaceful and harmonious world is practically achievable. If this does not, however, release us from the responsibility of trying to achieve it, then the most effective approach is that of phased, multilateral disarmament, under international inspection and control. "Unilateralism" is one of the most potent factors operating against this process, since it removes incentives to the adoption of those measures of arms control and restriction which are a necessary precondition of general, agreed measures of disarmament.

6. *The Multilateral Alternative*

THERE IS A WELL-WORN but still much-repeated joke about a visitor to Dublin who asked a passer-by if he could tell him the way to Trinity College, and was told, "Well, if I were you, I wouldn't start from here. . . ." Much the same might be said about disarmament; but it is, nevertheless, essential to consider the present position as a necessary point of departure, and not spend too much time arguing about how we got here. There are endless discussions, some less profitable than others, about the nature of the Soviet threat. Many serious observers in the West point to the massive Soviet military establishment, to the evidence of an expansionist Russian foreign policy, to the activities of Communist intelligence services, and to the clear

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statements by a succession of Kremlin leaders about the establishment of a global Communist order. On the other hand, there are those who argue that the Soviet Union is "defensively-minded", sincerely worried about the possibility of "encirclement" by the People's Republic of China and a hostile grouping of "capitalist powers" in the West.

Similarly, there is a debate of sorts between those who believe that all Russian actions in the field of foreign and military policy are part of a "global strategic plan", and those who argue that the Soviet Union acts and reacts "pragmatically" to each international situation as it develops. Whichever of these various theories of international relations may seem more convincing, the existing state of affairs poses real dangers of its own. On both sides of the East-West confrontation there is a massive military apparatus consisting not only of nuclear weapons of various sizes and ranges, but also of tanks, ships, aircraft, artillery, and a proliferation of weapons and military equipment of all kinds. In spite of this, it can be argued that war between the great powers is *not* more likely now than it has been in the past. Indeed it is possible to go further and argue that the introduction of nuclear weapons into the equation has made war *less* likely, since the universal effects would be too obviously appalling for anyone to contemplate.[4]

The mirror image of this argument is that if war came—through accident, miscalculation, or madness—the results would be so cataclysmic that there is a greater and more urgent need for disarmament now than there has ever been before. The only question—and it is a formidable one—is how to achieve it. Unilateralists claim that multilateral disarmament has failed, and that new and dramatic initiatives are needed. This ignores the fact that the preservation of peace and international order is an intricate and complicated process, requiring almost endless patience and persistent application of rigorous intellectual and political effort. There are no short cuts, easy answers, or "quick fixes." As Dr David Owen (former Labour Foreign Secretary and now one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party) pointed out in his pamphlet *Negotiate and Survive* (1980), the inertia in disarmament negotiations springs partly from the bureaucratic nature of negotiations and the lack of political impetus.

> "*To achieve movement towards disarmament, governments must be prepared at times to take the initiative as part of a coherent strategy to achieve momentum in all multilateral negotiating forums. It is the emphasis on large unilateral steps, divorced from any multilateral negotiation, which is unrealistic.*"

This underlines a fundamental truth about arms control and disarmament. If, at any stage in the disarmament process, the balance of power is substantially disturbed, the dangers will become much greater than they are today. Yet, clearly, it makes no sense to continue along the present path, because in an arms race which is spiralling upwards, there is just as great a danger of sudden imbalance as there is in a disarmament process spiralling downwards.

THEORETICALLY, the ideal solution is in the concept of general and complete disarmament under international control.

Two plans for this, one drafted by the Soviet Union and one by the West, have been under discussion in the United Nations and elsewhere since the early 1960s. The two drafts are remarkably similar in their general approach, each providing for a three-stage programme leading to disarmament to "levels required for internal security." The most radical, and so far intractable differences between the two approaches concern, inevitably, nuclear weapons and the verification of disarmament measures. The Soviet Union at first insisted upon the removal of nuclear weapons and

Where new U.S. missiles would go

Deployment is scheduled between Dec. 1983 and Dec. 1985 subject to progress of arms reduction talks and European approval.

	Pershing 2 launchers*	Cruise missiles
West Germany	108	96
Britain	—	160
Italy (in Sicily)	—	112
Belgium	—	48
Netherlands	—	48
Total	**108**	**464**

*Each launcher fires one missile, but could be reloaded with spare missiles.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

[4] See Michael Howard's article, "The Causes of War", ENCOUNTER, March 1982.

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delivery systems in the first phase, so assuring an overwhelming advantage for a power with superiority in conventional weapons (although this position was later modified to leave a "minimum deterrent" until the final phase). It was on the subject of verification, however, that the most insuperable obstacle persisted. While the West has always demanded effective inspection of forces remaining at every stage, in order to ensure that agreed measures of disarmament had in fact been carried out, the Soviet Union has been prepared to concede only inspection of weapons actually destroyed. While differences of this kind remain, progress on general and complete disarmament is likely to remain so slow as to be almost undetectable.

In the meantime the great powers have concentrated their attention on what were originally known as "partial and collateral measures of disarmament" but which are now more appropriately described as measures of "Arms Control", since they involve no actual reduction of armaments. In the last 25 years there have, in fact, been a number of serious and important arms control agreements, covering such matters as the demilitarisation of the Antarctic (1959); nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere in outer space and under water (1963); military activities in outer space (1967); the emplacement of nuclear weapons on the sea-bed (1971); and the development of germ warfare (1972). Although these agreements are not to be despised—or dismissed as irrelevant (as many "peace" people tend somewhat irrationally to do)—they clearly do not have much impact on the central problem, which is the great and growing accumulation of weapons, both nuclear and conventional, on both sides of the Super-power confrontation. It is this issue which governments should now tackle much more seriously and constructively than they have shown evidence of doing in the past.

IN ORDER TO establish a point of departure, it is necessary to be sensible about what is practically achievable as well as what is desirable and also to be clear about where the priorities should lie. General and complete disarmament, although ideally desirable, cannot be regarded as much more than a theoretical option. In the first place it is almost certainly outside the bounds of practical possibility in any context of international relations which can reasonably be foreseen at present; and even if it were possible to achieve, it is by no means certain that it would lead to a safer or more stable world. No one knows how to solve the problems of peace-keeping in a disarmed world; and the United Nations, our only international body of substance, shows no sign of being able to do so. The real priorities now are to stop the spiral of nuclear weapons development—to put it into reverse—and to make deep cuts in conventional forces without creating serious imbalances which would endanger the security of either side.

Much of the argument about nuclear weapons has been confused by largely irrelevant arguments about the difference between nuclear deterrence and "fighting a nuclear war." The difference is almost totally illusory. There is no one of any respectable intelligence who believes that it is possible to fight and win a major war with nuclear weapons. The degree of destruction, death, and environmental degradation makes the concept of "winning" such a war almost incredibly bizarre. Nor does it make sense to believe that such a war could be "limited", either geographically or by categories of weapons. On the other hand, it is entirely unreasonable to expect those responsible for defence and national security to possess nuclear weapons as a deterrent without having some idea about how they would be used in war, *if* they should fail in their deterrent purpose. The essence of deterrence—which is the basic function of all military defence—is to demonstrate that if deterrence fails, the target of aggression is capable of using his armed forces according to a coherent and effective plan.

It is therefore foolish for unilateralists to accuse the Western Alliance of "planning to fight a nuclear war", simply because its military planners contemplate how they might use their weapons if deterrence should fail. This is no more intelligent or significant than saying that the British Army of the Rhine is "planning to fight a war" against the Soviet Union because it trains its soldiers stationed on the Hanover plain in the tactics and methods of fighting such a war, if it should happen as a consequence of a Russian attack.

Another thread in the CND argument concerns "the mirror-image." This is a process in which, it is suggested, one side believes that the other is developing, or has developed, a new defensive system, or a new offensive weapon, which might affect the deterrent value of its own nuclear forces. It therefore seeks at once to redress the balance. The apparent advantage gained by the other side is often illusory, and the measure taken to counteract it nugatory. Intelligence assessments, it is argued, are frequently extrapolated in such a way as to

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postulate theoretical imbalances in the future. Attempts to redress these are often based upon false premises—such as the assumption that the correct response to a new medium-range missile on the one side is another medium-range missile on the other. In this self-perpetuating competition it is apparently forgotten that there is no one-hundred-per-cent certain and effective defence against nuclear missiles—nor is there ever likely to be. It is a seductive argument which conveniently ignores one important historic factor—namely that the Soviet Union is an expansionist power influenced by motives which go far beyond the preservation of its own security.

It is essential that *both* sides should now recognise that the continuing competition in the development of nuclear weapons systems is not only cripplingly expensive and appallingly dangerous in the event of war, but it is also unnecessary. Adequate and effective deterrence can be achieved at much lower levels of nuclear armaments; and it should not be beyond the capabilities of the two principal nuclear powers to arrive at an agreement about what those levels should be. Clearly, it is a complicated matter. It is not enough to say, as some of the more superficial commentators have suggested, that "one missile" or "one missile-firing submarine" or "one megaton warhead" is enough. But there clearly is an effective level of minimum deterrence, and it is towards this that the nuclear powers should now be directing their energies; and if the Soviet Union is not willing to accept minimum deterrence, Western negotiating positions should be designed to demonstrate that fact.

A USEFUL COROLLARY to these efforts would be an agreement on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban.

The partial treaty of 1963 left open the possibility of underground testing—partly because of the difficulties of verifying an underground test ban without inspection on the site (which the Soviet Union was unwilling to permit); and partly because both sides wanted to continue certain nuclear weapons experiments for which underground testing was necessary. The verification problems have now been largely removed by developments in remote seismic detection and identification; and a complete cessation of all nuclear weapons testing would make agreement on nuclear arms control substantially easier to achieve.

The balanced reduction of conventional forces in the Central European theatre has, so far, proved difficult to achieve, principally because there is basic disagreement about the existing balance. Western intelligence estimates indicate that the Warsaw Pact is substantially stronger than NATO; the Soviet Union, on the other hand, claims that there is broad parity. This disagreement is crucial, since the Soviet Union claims that there should be equal reductions of forces (which, in the view of Western negotiators, would leave the USSR in a permanent state of superiority); while the West wants to achieve a balance of remaining forces. In any case, it has so far proved impossible to resolve difficulties about verification—either of reductions or of subsequent levels.

Serious negotiations are, however, already in progress across the whole field of arms control and disarmament. The United States and the Soviet Union have been engaged since 1969 in attempts to find some agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons systems. Some progress has been made in two agreements on offensive systems (SALT I and SALT II) and on the limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs), which have improved the general negotiating climate. In 1982, at the suggestion of the United States, the discussions moved from "*limitation*" to "*reduction.*" The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in Geneva are now entering a crucial stage. The United States has proposed an initial reduction of warheads by one third to 5,000, with no more than half to be land-based missiles; the Russians have proposed an immediate nuclear weapons freeze followed by a reduction in land-based and sea-based missiles by 25% in 1990. Although the negotiating position of each side naturally has features objectionable to the other (there would scarcely by any need for negotiation if this were not so), the fact that the two Superpowers are seriously discussing a substantial reduction in their nuclear weapons systems represents a progress of a very significant kind.

The Soviet Union also wants to link reductions in strategic weapons with agreement on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF), the subject of separate talks in Geneva. The American position on INF is known in the jargon as "the zero option"—which would involve the removal of the Russian intermediate-range missiles (SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5) in exchange for an undertaking by the West not to deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe. The Russians, on the other hand, insist that the independent nuclear striking forces of Britain and France should be included as well in their equation.

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THE URGENT NEED NOW is for a serious, constructive approach, on both sides, to an immensely complicated problem. The occasional bursts of apparently intransigent propaganda which accompany the negotiations might reasonably be regarded as the normal background noise by which each side tries to place its own demands in a favourable light. Provided, however, that the political momentum is maintained, it is possible to suggest that there might be real progress in 1983.

It is this glimmer of hope which is now being put at risk by the activities of the "peace movements." If their demands were to be met (a remote contingency, but one which in certain political circumstances cannot be entirely ruled out), major bargaining positions in the negotiations would have been unilaterally abandoned. The deployment of Cruise missiles and Pershing II would be cancelled, leaving over 300 Russian SS-20 missiles, each with three nuclear warheads, each warhead capable of destroying a major European target. The British Polaris submarines would no longer exist, and the process of the disintegration of NATO would have begun.

There would, in effect, be no incentive for the Soviet Union to negotiate at all.

7. *Peace with Security*

IT IS TEMPTING for those who write articles of this kind to identify "watersheds" . . . "turning points" . . . "dangerous decades" and other dramatic symbols of urgency. It may, therefore, seem predictable to suggest that 1983 is likely to be a critical year for the security of the West, and, more specifically, for the future of Britain. Important negotiations on arms control and disarmament are reaching points of decision; the unilateralist movement is beginning to polarise the political system; and it is, to say the least, likely that there will be a general election in the United Kingdom before the end of the year. It is essential that Britain should remain firmly committed to a prudent and constructive policy for maintaining peace and assuring the national security, based on strong and effective military defences, while at the same time encouraging serious negotiations to reduce the unnecessarily high level of armaments in the Soviet Union and the United States.

So far as the disarmament band in this spectrum is concerned, the Western Alliance has endorsed the American position as expressed by President Reagan in his speech of 18 November 1981, namely the elimination of land-based Cruise missiles and Pershing II; a substantial reduction in strategic nuclear weapons; deep cuts in NATO and Warsaw Pact ground forces in Europe; and new safeguards to reduce the risk of accidental war. The ability of the United Kingdom to negotiate effectively on the basis of these policies is now under threat from unilateralist and other "peace movements", and from political parties which have adopted their programmes.

It is, therefore, essential that this threat should be clearly recognised, and met resolutely and unequivocally. This must, of course, involve a systematic explanation of the case for peace—real peace, not Newspeak "peace"—negotiated from a position of assured security; the case, in fact, for multilaterally agreed, verifiable measures of arms control and disarmament. The plausible, superficially seductive arguments of E. P. Thompson and his collaborators must be met by a constant flow of facts about the real military balance, the progress of international negotiations, and the grave dangers of unilateral concessions. There are a few people in, or on the fringes of, the unilateralist movement who might still be open to rational persuasion—and there are millions outside it who need reassurance and reinforcement for their instinctive aversion from the "peace movements."

It is clearly too much to hope that the CND might modify its obsessive concern with unilateral disarmament. But as long as the "peace movements" continue to engage in uncritical and repetitive demonstration—as long as they continue to construct their propaganda around hysterical evocations of Hiroshima and incinerated babies, as though unilateralists were the only people to know about, or care about, the terrifying consequences of nuclear war—and as long as the press, radio, and television continue to regard the theatre of protest as more interesting and more important than the underlying issues—there will be no serious discussion of matters like the wisdom of the Trident decision, the fallacy of the "tactical" nuclear weapon, and the possibility of evolving a defensive strategy for NATO which places less exclusive reliance upon nuclear deterrence.

It is important, therefore, to resist the temptation to regard the "peace" people as misguided but harmless idealists. The directorate of the unilateralist movement constitutes a hard left-wing political organisation. In itself, of course, there is

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nothing alarming about that. In a democracy, there is a plurality of views on any political issue. What is unique about CND and its collaborators is that they attempt to conceal their political aims under the slogans and pretensions of a moral crusade. Their leaders and many of their members claim, either openly or implicitly, a monopoly of intellectual purity as well. The effect of this upon people of less than robust moral and intellectual constitution is to create the impression that those who are not on the side of the "peace movements" are either morally delinquent or mentally obtuse.

Even this might not in itself be a matter for profound concern were it not for the fact that the aims of the unilateralists are at the present moment in post-War history positively dangerous. The logical end of unilateralism is the disintegration of the West's system of collective security, leaving the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact untouched. This carries with it the inevitable consequence of the erosion of our political freedom. That is what lies at the end of the road which begins with ritual chants of "*Ban the Bomb*", "*No Cruise, no Pershing*", and the somewhat more politically candid cries of "*Reagan Out, Thatcher Out.*" Writing of the European Nuclear Disarmament movements in his *Negotiate and Survive*, Dr David Owen claims that ". . . it would be a fool who lightly decries such a movement of protest, who disparages its motives, or who denigrates or dismisses its purposes." Perhaps; but it would be a fool *and* a knave who did not recognise the dangers of what these movements are trying to achieve and who did not seek to expose the calculated political activism which lies behind what Dr Owen calls "the public conscience and public passions."

In what will probably be an election year in Britain, those who are concerned with national security have a duty to meet the threat head-on; for we are faced with an issue which might well be a decisive factor in the political future of the United Kingdom. The Labour Party is now committed by its annual conference to the unilateralist position; the SDP's policies, as outlined by Dr Owen and Mr William Rodgers, are robust and courageous, although they are likely to find it difficult to effect a meeting of minds with their Liberal Party allies on this issue.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, much more to this than simply counteracting the propaganda of unilateralism. Britain urgently needs to assume a demonstrably strong and active voice in the world of arms control and disarmament. At the moment its negotiating stance is generally low-level and hedged about with bureaucratic inhibitions. The United Kingdom ought to have powerful political representation at all the negotiations in which it takes part; and there should be significant political figures involved in the formulation of arms control and disarmament policies—men and women with constant and ready access to their opposite numbers in Washington and, to some extent, in Moscow. There ought to be, as well, a corresponding strengthening of the machinery of disarmament policy-making in Whitehall, with resources in the Cabinet office capable of coordinating the activities of the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence, and providing advice direct to the Prime Minister.

All this, however, concerns the provision of instruments and machinery for what is fundamentally a problem of national will and spirit. Exposed to the rhetoric of E. P. Thompson and his friends, spiritual surrender may begin to seem to some people a course infinitely preferable to political resistance. The siren song of the "peace movements" was most vividly crystallised by a student protester in an American university, who carried, with evident pride, a banner with the strange device "*Nothing Is Worth Dying For.*" Albert Camus wrote, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, rather more thoughtfully, that ". . . *a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying.*" The sterile, nihilistic proposition that nothing is worth dying for carries with it the unspoken corollary that nothing is worth living for.

It is a philosophy of despair from which the great majority of the people in this country would passionately dissent.

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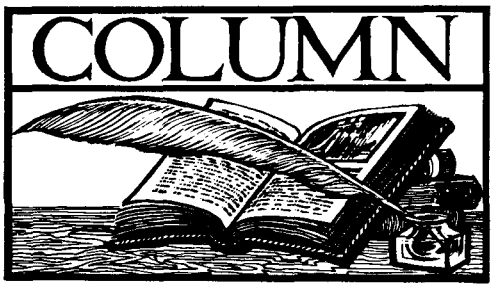

I MAY AS WELL own up: I've suffered for years from an embarrassing social disease. It's not something that people like to talk about. No public health act mentions it, and no doctor promises a permanent cure. But the malady's more common than reticence about it might suggest. When it was reported some years ago in the British press, case-histories came from all over—including one from an American academic who sought relief by lying with his legs in the ice-box. The problem? Itching bone-marrow: an ache or irritation in the lower limbs that doesn't respond to external scratching, or wriggling, or even a brisk walk. And when are the symptoms worst? At night, in the theatre, being scolded.

There are, of course, other occasions when the bone-marrow barometer gives a twinge. Department stores and supermarkets, especially with Muzak, affect some sufferers. Faculty meetings, party rallies, diplomatic dinners, lectures by painters, show-biz autobiographies—any of these can do the same. Myself, I have to avoid German silent movies: one glom from those mad Teutonic eyeballs, one slow, frozen ham-actor's gesture, one *Sturm-und-Drang* subtitle, and the internal itch has me crossing and uncrossing my legs like a Cossack dancer, bumping into nearby seats. Let old acquaintance be forgot, for the sake of old Lang silents.

But that's only half of it. The demoniac screen, in Lotte Eisner's phrase, is as nothing against the didactic stage. Not that boulevard theatre was altogether allergy-free. When I first encountered it, evening wear was customary. Ladies from out of town tottered in on tiny glittering heels, wreathed in ectoplasmic clinging stuff, gloved to the elbow in glacé kid. Their escorts, usually "Charles" or "Jeremy" sung out in delighted recognition, had silver hair swept back above pink merchant bankers' cheeks. A cocktail buzz brimmed the intermission; weak jokes raised gales of well-bred laughter; in quieter scenes, tea-trays and chocolate boxes added their *obbligato* from the stalls. With a few exceptions, revels of that ilk are ended. Today it's jeans and kaftans and leg-warmers and wishing the Afro hair-do in front could be removed like a hat. What's rebarbative now may still be the audience, if you feel that way; but the truly lethal dose of bone-marrow irritant is more likely to come from the play.

AT ONE TIME I might have said "from behind the footlights." Here and there, shamefacedly no doubt, a few theatre directors still rely on the proscenium arch. London's National Theatre actually boasts a proscenium auditorium. But—in the name of what? Democracy?—most of the arches have gone. In the ritzier theatres, the stage projects like a mannequins' walkway at a fashion show; in "fringe" performances, spectators sit like parents at children's home dramatics, on a level with the action and barely two yards away. At that range, you can see every wrinkle.

For theatre buffs, this may be an attraction. Friends who have long derided my preference for the cinema "because it's more real" point out quite reasonably that little could be less realistic than a model shot, a travelling matte, a studio mock-up, or even a scene shot on location with the camera crew carefully concealed. Whereas in the theatre—! Here, they claim, it's all happening before your very eyes, with real actors living and breathing and responding in a two-way transaction with the audience. A real event is taking place, uniquely: this, for better or worse, is it. And if it's an improvised show, then it's all the more special. No movie could improve on that.

Well, maybe. I recall seeing two separate performances by an experimental company, one in New York, one in London. Both were allegedly improvised: both were virtually identical. And while in some shows, such as pantomimes, there's obvious interaction with the audience, in many the mutual reaction is so muted as to seem non-existent until the curtain call. What really strikes the prosaic spectator is the artificiality of the whole affair: the passivity of the audience in front of dark deeds, insults, grief, or murder; the absence of the "fourth wall" or of more in "theatre in the round"; the artfulness of grouping and movement; the absence or implausibility of props and scenery—high-tech, settings for Shakespeare, cardboard-thin doors for Shaw; the hygienic rags worn by stage paupers; the plimsoll slap of boots on a parade-ground made of wood. How hard it is to suspend one's disbelief, to forget one's own existence, to swim into the drama as one's sucked into even the feeblest of films. It's already enough to set the bone-marrow throbbing just a touch.

AND THEN COMES the real gamma-ray onslaught: the theatre of ideas. Again, it's nothing new. In modern times alone, it dates at least as far as Harley Granville-Barker. But what's new now is its

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all-pervasiveness. Playgoers looking for towering metaphysics, human drama, individual conflict, or just plain fun have to watch the critics very carefully. For one *Guys and Dolls, Amadeus, Sleuth*, or *Hamlet*, there seem to be about fifty ideological concoctions claiming to deal with "our society", revolution, class, unemployment, terrorism, capitalism, Third World politics, or The Bomb. Almost all of them send me hurrying home to slide my legs into the freezer.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to argue that these themes are unimportant—or that playwrights should ignore them. We all know that the Bard tackled politics, if from a reactionary point of view. What bugs me (and my bone-marrow) is not the fact of discussing politics in the theatre, or the usually predictable Left-wing stance adopted by the dramatists. That's their affair. What's mine is the resultant boredom—mainly due to the perfunctory, half-baked, superficial nature of the debate. All too often, the tedium is the message.

THE LATEST INSTANCE, in my case, was David Hare's London production of his own play *A Map of the World*. Its subject—the rich countries' attitude to Third-World poverty—is, or should be, one of the biggest issues of our time. The author, whose own sympathies lie with the underdog, does his best to be fair to his opponents, lampooning aid-industry cant and United Nations wastefulness. Some of the scenes are sharp and witty. There are good, theatrical surprises. For all that, *A Map of the World* was as dire for me as an old Fritz Lang movie. Why?

Part of the reason was the production. When an author directs his own play, he must be tempted to be over-reverent to his own words. Here, most of the words were delivered at what seemed dictation speed—especially by the young, blond, Left-wing journalist who presumably enshrines David Hare's own views. He looked a little like Stephen Spender in the 1930s; but he sounded half-stoned. "Oh, yes!" he repeatedly muttered, pausing to make sure we'd got his meaning. At the end, he went off on some heroic mission, as if ascending F6; but his train was wrecked, and he was killed. Earlier, he'd spoken up for Youth against corrupt Age, and for young countries who wanted to try new forms of democracy—perhaps one-party rule?

Against him was set an Anglicised Indian, sceptical of aid and progress and Western guilty consciences: several reviewers likened him to V.S. Naipaul. His snide lines drew laughs when I was there: but how far David Hare endorsed them was hard to judge. His role in the drama was to make possible a real debate about "North-South" issues; but here the play, and not just the production, fell far short of its aims. Instead of discussion, it provided an *argumentum ad hominem*, each side attacking the other, not the other's position; and the contest was trivialised further by having as its stake or kitty the person of an obliging girl. Whoever won the argument was to win her. Big deal, one might have thought, since her part was sketchily written; but in the end it was called off. Perhaps Hare himself had second thoughts about this effort to "dramatise, dramatise", since he set the whole drama in a tricksy frame. What we were witnessing, it soon appeared, was a film re-enactment of a story by the Anglicised Indian—so any defects in its writing or conception, or even in the Left-wing hero, could be ascribed to the V.S. Naipaul character. Heads I win, tails you lose. And if that wasn't distance enough, the film re-enactment was being directed by a crude, clownish cynic, who may have made a bish of it anyway. The only "real" life presented in the play, in fact, was back-stagery, or back-lottery. The whole thing belonged to the whiting school of literature, with its tail in its mouth—if not, in this instance, its tongue in its cheek.

By now, I expect your legs are aching. But seeing the play was about as confusing as that inadequate account of it. The real issues were barely touched upon. How can rich countries be persuaded to improve their aid policies? How can aid reach those who need it most? How can recipient countries learn to help themselves? How can countries already industrialised cope with new Third-World competition? How can Third-World countries govern themselves democratically, and guard against tyranny from either Right or Left? What strings are attached to aid? (The play implied, without proof or discussion, that the strings are unacceptably many and tight).

Some of these questions might have been explored, if not answered, in a quite different drama—the dilemmas facing, say, a Third-World ruler, or an aid administrator, or a Western politician beset by conflicting pressures. That might have put some flesh on the dialectical bones. But it wouldn't have been *A Map of the World*, or the theatre of ideas. Oh, no!—as the young journalist might have said: "What you want is a good old-fashioned well-made play, with Characters, and bourgeois Western white Individuals, and a neat little Plot, and a Sting in the Tail. Realism. Illusion. A Slice of Life. Well, that's all Old, can't you see, and I'm Young, and Different, and Difficult. . . . So there!"

Conceding all that, I still find such examples of the theatre of ideas dispiritingly ill-thought-out. Leave aside the fact that public or taxpayers' money partly funds most of these onslaughts on majority attitudes. Leave aside the paradox of well-heeled theatre-goers sitting through attacks on themselves written by successful playwrights and

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performed by privileged actors. Leave aside the thought that if we came away converted we'd surely stop buying theatre tickets and give the proceeds to Oxfam. I'm not asking for consistency: if people were consistent, nominal Christians would sell all they have and give the money to the poor. Good God, what an idea! No: I'm only asking for writers to debate issues seriously.

SOME HOPES! The other day, there fell through my junk-mail letter-box a belated communication from the Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Its title, like that of a David Hare play, was *The Nuclear Debate*. In two columns and two colours, as in *A Map of the World*, it set forth "*What the Unilateralists Say*" and "*What the Multilateralists Say*." In the late Chairman Mao's China or some other earnest venue, one could almost imagine the pamphlet's being staged. Even in cold print, it's a good effort to be fair to both sides. We all know, of course, where the pamphlet's authors stand—with the multilateralists. I stand with them too. But just as an exercise, I went through the argument underlying the statements on either side with which I most agreed. It was no surprise that a majority were in the multilateralist column.

"A perceived intention to retaliate is a powerful deterrent to an aggressor.... Unilateral action by the UK would not reduce the nuclear weapons held by the USSR, US, France, or China. Nor is there any moral gain in renouncing nuclear weapons, yet sheltering under the nuclear protection of the US....

"A 'first strike' forms no part of US or NATO policy; but a retaliatory strategy is necessary to ensure the credibility of deterrence.... Deterrence continues to make nuclear war most unlikely.... Unilateral disarmament invites aggression and so increases the risk of war....

"Civil defence planning is humanitarian in its objective. It increases our ability to survive an attack and reinforces deterrence.... Declaring nuclear-free zones is not an answer but a deception, given the facts of history and geography.... A 'launch on warning' system is not NATO policy.... In a nuclear war both sides would be losers; NATO's nuclear weapons exist to deter aggression and so keep the peace. NATO has pledged that none of its weapons, nuclear or conventional, will ever be used except in response to attack....

"The Europeans asked for NATO's intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) to be modernised because of the Soviet missile build-up.... The use of cruise missile bases by US forces in an emergency would be a matter of circumstances prevailing at the time.... Soviet INF—including over 300 new SS-20 missiles introduced since 1977—heavily outnumber those of NATO. NATO proposes only to counter the latest Soviet threat to Europe.... Modernising NATO's defences will help to prevent us being attacked.

"The UK, as a major member of NATO, would be a target in any future war between East and West, whether or not nuclear weapons are based here.... If we in the West give up our weapons anyway, it would remove the incentive for the Soviet Union to negotiate.... A freeze would leave the USSR with a clear and dangerous advantage in missiles. Balanced disarmament is essential to preserve each side's security and its confidence to take further steps....

"The USSR and other East European governments have never shown any readiness to allow independent public opinion to challenge their defence policies. A European nuclear-weapon-free zone would leave Western Europe at the mercy of the USSR."

So far so good. But how about this, on the unilateralist side?

"The use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified in any circumstances because of the indiscriminate effect on millions of innocent people....

"It is madness to threaten to attack anyone when that threat, if carried out, would result in your own destruction....

"The 'zero option' is unfair on the USSR because it forces them to give up their missiles....

"Getting rid of nuclear weapons from Europe will improve the prospects for peace....

"We should concentrate on conventional defence and leave nuclear deterrence to those who can afford it."

As the last quotation shows, *The Nuclear Debate* fails to distinguish clearly between Western unilateralism (disastrous) and scrapping the British deterrent (possibly advantageous). It leaves Christian and credibility arguments largely unexamined. And it avoids discussing nuclear retaliation against overwhelming conventional force. It remains, to my mind, a convincing document; but if even a debate on this level, written by experts, reveals considerable *lacunae*, what can we expect from playwrights?

ACRONYM, the Association of Concerned Readers Opposed to Numbing Your Mind, has just opened a sub-section, LONDONWIT: the League of Objectors to Nugatory Discussion of Nuclear Weapons in Theatres. Worried by theatre aggression? Join now.

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Edwin Brock

The Heroes

"After the war . . . say 'I fought and marched with the Desert Army'"
WINSTON CHURCHILL

Who is this old man
in a Basque onion-seller's beret
blowing cracked notes on a bugle?

Why is he standing in desert sand
with a lopsided look on his shopkeeper's face
and trinkets on his jacket?

He is a comedian.

No. Wait. The camera is pulling away.
He is not alone. Other old men
are around him, uncomfortably formal,
looking where the lens is pointing.

It is a troupe of clowns.

They are marching, no they are walking
in file, between small concrete mounds.
Somebody is holding a flag.

Wait. Listen. A voice is talking from a cloud.
They are the old men of history:
pennants pinned on a bedroom wall,
free from the Daily Mail.
They are Our Side.

The old comedian is talking in a funny voice
to a clean face lined with elocution.
It all comes back: hearts of oak,
true grit, jolly good, gather round
the donkeys.

Where are the actors now who played
Rommel and Monty? Where, for Chrissake,
is the director?

Unrehearsed, the fools cannot find
the right names on the right graves,
are raising their glasses vaguely
above any old concrete mound.

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And the camera has pulled back too far,
is framing them in dry space.
This is no cast of thousands
it is a shuffle of survivors
the programme pulled together for a few pounds.

Here is a token Kraut in a costume hat
"Vee should neffer enemies haff been"
Here is a close-up of a tight-lipped
handshake.

Now poppies are falling from
the Albert Hall and Eddie Calvert
is playing a golden trumpet,
lest we forget an institution.

Hard of hearing,
the old men no longer know
what their loud leaders are shouting about.

They do not understand
that war is dead and tomorrow
will bring only a collision of deterrents.

They hang tunelessly
on the last note of their old bugle,
certain that some memory
of something will survive.

Peter Redgrove

Museum

A tapestry of scenes of love and hunting
Embroidered as the bed's testimony or tester,
A cloth mirror to watch one's after-love thoughts in,

Big fat bees of damask sewing.
In the museum, the Still Zoo, the salmon
Sheds scales like a dead rose behind glass,

The lighted mirrors of the carp's skin go out;
In life it likes the muddy waters that mute its brilliance.
There is a section of the mole's fortress, who has bitten off

The head of each worm in its leader with exquisite neatness;
The carp again, like marquetry of pearl; the Fantomas Eel;
The grindstone coughing at the model cottage door,

Sneezing sparks, a cold of fire; through glass a tree
Opening and shutting its high doors
Its sliding green sashes continually.

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Walls Do a Prison Make . . .

Criminal Issues—By EDWARD PEARCE

"BASE DURANCE and contagious prison", says Ancient Pistol. And we have commonly looked upon the institution in that sort of light, wherever possible averting our eyes. It is a commonplace among politicians whose set of illusions calls itself an enlightenment, to suppose that we have too many convicted persons here in prison. The actual number fluctuates in and around 42,000. And according to the school of penology which attracts Mr Roy Hattersley, the Shadow Home Secretary, that figure should be a ceiling if indeed it is not brought down.

We are told seriously by serious people that the number in prison should accommodate itself to a fixed figure. If crime goes up, if the number of convictions increases, the number of imprisoned persons must stand pat. Adjustment can take the form of earlier and better parole—down from two-thirds of sentence, to a half, to a third, to the least fraction one's heart or whim desires. Or it can take the form of a wise abstention by judges from giving custodial sentences.

Now this is an odd view, for we are living in Britain with a crime rate which marches forward like the boundaries of a limitlessly ambitious irridentist state.

It is argued that prisons are old, unhygienic, and crowded. So they are. Mr John McCarthy, the former Governor of Wormwood Scrubs prison, has won himself a place alongside the community policeman, Mr John Alderson (who was formerly Chief Constable of poverty-stricken, riot-blasted Devon and Cornwall), as one of the Samurai of progress, guaranteed applause and reflex esteem in the press by first denouncing his own prison as a dustbin and then, with maximum attention, resigning from the prison service.

They join the liberal pantheon on prison and police questions. Liberal orthodoxy does not greatly believe in the efficacy of prison; it wants its term reduced by subterfuge, and looks upon the release of convicted persons on to the heads of the general public with a satisfaction which could out-smirk the Buddha. Unfortunately we also have a foolish body of opinion which thinks in terms of crude, brutal punishments and casts a long, lingering look behind at the old regalia of cruel punishment—the birch, the cat-of-nine-tails, and the gallows.

For my own part I am not disposed to make precedence between the two mentalities. We need the bull-ring mentality of the death-and-mutilation school the way we need Lord Liverpool for Prime Minister. And the early-parole, fixed-ceiling-for-prison-accommodation people are playing Fidelio with street-wise brutes and in the process making witless war upon poorer people, those first and last victims of crime, whose condition of life deteriorates as offences against small property and unimportant people become the norm.

WE NEED TO CLEAR our minds of the two stupidities and to do some thinking on the subjects of both prison and the police. We are not at America's pass.

And if you want to duck the issue you choose the right set of figures to make your comparison with. Set against Detroit or New York, Liverpool and London are nowhere. Set against London and Liverpool 25 years ago, they are terrifying. There is not only more crime but specifically more street crime. The principal losers from it are solid respectable working people, who have watched decent districts fall apart in less than half a lifetime.

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Mr George Cunningham, the Social Democratic Member for Islington South (and incidentally one of the best, most independent spirits in the Commons) made a saw-edged attack on the usual glib assumptions in a Commons adjournment debate last month. He described the rows of locks, bolts, and chains fixed to a single door on the ground floor of a tower block, the habituation of his North London constituents to fear of a knock on the door late at night. What they fear in Islington is not the visits of police but the lack of them. The knock on the door comes from teenagers with a propensity for putting women of 80 into intensive-care units.

Mr Cunningham had a huge contempt for the socio-babble of the noisiest advocates of a soft line.

> "Let us take this phrase 'Community Policing' and lock it up. It is a substitute for thinking. . . . We should equip ourselves with more, much more prison space not because we want to lock up 80,000 people rather than 40,000, but because we want to differentiate the kinds of prison and because we need to make the whole prison system fit to cope with present pressures."

As for sentences, they "should be nearer, more approximate to what was served, otherwise they lacked all deterrent persuasion." Now Mr Cunningham is no reactionary. He is a gifted Social Democrat with a highly developed bump of uncommon sense (not a strong point in that cerebration unit); and he is MP for Islington South, which is like being Member for the constituency of Medias Res.

His words, roughly paraphrased here from the recent short debate on "the Social Consequences of Crime" which I attended, are of course correct. If we are to apply common sense to prisons and policing, we will delete every fashionable idea from our minds. Crime happens most of all to the luckless people to whom local government, in the form of tower blocks, re-siting, and the more anti-human forms of town planning, also happens. They live with what is called petty crime—the smashing of doors and windows, thefts, street assaults—the general dirt and defilement which the snug suburbs and pleasant villages of retreat, however much they may trouble themselves at occasional large burglaries, never get. The least well-off are the first and then the recurring victims of a penal system which doesn't work.

SO WHERE DO WE START? The complex underlying causes—education decline, diminished parental control, and social malaise, are real but enmiring. Civilisation in decline is a conversational topic, not something we can use a monkey-wrench on. Within the narrow compass of possibility what *can* we do?

For a start we can acknowledge that overcrowded prisons exist because there are more convicted criminals than there is prison space; and there are more convicted criminals because more crimes are being committed; therefore we build more prisons. Simple and plain enough that may be, but it is the diametric opposite of what is being preached by the leaders of opinion. They wish to accommodate the growing number of offences with the evacuation of a larger number of offenders on to the necks of Mr Cunningham's constituents. It is surely time for a view which says, "I am neither a hanger nor a flogger but I am an unflinching locker-up." If we do not think that innocent people should be promiscuously punished in their neighbourhoods, we have to build very many more prisons.

What happens at the moment in the courts is that judges are under administrative rather than liberal pressure. They are making decisions for administrative reasons, with one eye over the shoulder at the accommodation situation. The view that Bloggs should go down for three years is counterpointed with the information that Leicester won't take any more and that they were on the roof in Hull last week throwing tiles. So Bloggs goes free on a suspended sentence and a reproof which is the merest expense of spirit in a waste of shame; and the judges are blamed for being soft. In fact the judges, whom more than most men (far more than our appalling Bishops) we can broadly trust, should be set free as their own men to be hard or soft on the merits of each case. They should sentence offenders as their own wisdom and experience direct, not according to the straits of a boarding-house keeper in a good season.

Now, in fairness, the present Home Secretary (William Whitelaw) has started a building programme. There has been some break with the glazed-over apathy of earlier years. But as these are brick-and-mortar-built prisons, they will take five or six years to be in full operation (and they will still be inadequate for the need). Meanwhile the Minister is reduced to calling for less imprisonment. The Home Office needs a bridging programme, something which can take the pressure off the citadel prisons and be in operation within a few months. The answer is simple enough. Open prisons, decent encampments of Nissen huts and tennis wire, can be thrown up, *subito*, with no fuss. The Home Office, in all conscience, owns enough suitable land. I simply do not believe that it is beyond the wit of a strong Home Secretary to have 15,000 extra places available within a year.

THE USUAL ARGUMENT—and one which can be appreciated—is that if temporary accommodation is budgeted for, then permanent building is penalised. It has no business to be. And if there is one area in which we should all be willing capital

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spenders, it is the prison building programme. For without that spending we are going to have both continued rising street crime and undiminished potential for explosion inside the congested prisons. I would sooner spend quite a lot of money and wonder hypothetically what a British Attica would have been like, than find out. The beauty of high-speed, light-weight prisons is that with them we could channel the less violent, least dangerous prisoners away from the citadels, something made non-optional anyway by the low security involved. Such a move could also be the first step towards a sophisticating of the prison system into something which tried to face the huge differences in kinds and types of men who go to jail.

It is argued, and rightly, that many of those currently in prison shouldn't be outside either. We have vagrants, drunks and others for whom life has proved too much, who go to prison and become micro-recidivists, offending again and again in small-time fashion in order to beat a path to the smelly warmth of "inside." We have done ludicrously little to provide hostels or any kind of separate accommodation for people different in kind (and in greater need) from the young and violent, and yet again from the practised and expert.

THE BRITISH PRISON SYSTEM screams with unsubtlety. It exists on expedients and upon pieces of stamp-edging like community service, in whose deterrent power I believe almost as little as in its utility. They are economies masquerading as innovations. There is every case for humanity and help, but only after you have first obtained the prison space, that margin which is the precondition of getting anywhere. We must make a central social provision for the well-being of victims[1]—those at the sharp end in Islington and all the other centres of dereliction—and there would be no better provision than the addition of 15,000 prison places to those we already have.

End the farce of administrative sentencing, leave judges to do the necessary, and one problem will come down to size immediately. For no intended deterrent will work if it is widely known to operate within the mists of uncertainty. The 18th century was ready in principle to hang anything that moved, and it enjoyed a ferocious criminality nestling in the Alsatias of St Giles, the Nicol, and Whitefriars. For the laws were not only absurdly unjust and thus inoperable, but the force with which to police them was corrupt, fragile, and inadequate to the ultimate degree. Londoners still speak of an inept person as a "Charley", recalling as they do so, the name of the blundering, feeble night-watchmen upon whom the prevention of crime in that age depended.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM is made uncertain by the weak and unpredictable sentences which space shortages have conjured up; by the operation of parts of the Children and Young Persons Act which put some offenders almost above the law; by the lottery of parole; and by the broad demoralisation of the criminal courts. The law is random and thus not feared. The certainty of three months is worth the hypothetical possibility of seven years. For the hard 18th century was at one with the soft 20th in its inability to deliver.

By comparison the 90 years following Peel's entry into the Home Office in 1824 were astonishingly successful. Given the unreliability of Victorian statistics, one cannot give easy technical proof, but the overwhelming indication is that the graph of crime fell, and fell to a point far below present figures. There was a great falling off ... and latterly there has been a great climbing back.

Yet Peel swept away the 200-plus capital offences which the previous age had accumulated. He and his successors limited themselves to the possible: in practice to a police force with a rising reputation for competence, and a swift, crisp readiness to lock up offenders. The full benefit of safe streets, and an assumption that crime was exceptional, came gradually and was perhaps enjoyed most fully by those who lived immediately after the Victorians; but that state of affairs did come. The first task of a contemporary citizen is to realise that we have regressed—that the movement for most offences since 1945 looks in graph form like a gently rising gradient turning into a hillside and then into an alpine wall.

WE HAVE NOT GOT BACK to the society which Henry Fielding tried to police, but we inhabit one altogether different from that which existed when Mr Alfred Denning, KC, was appointed to the Bench as a Judge of first instance 39 years ago.

If there is a single missing factor among those which we can control, it is the absence of certainty. No lawbreaker knows what his punishment will be. No one expects the law to bite at first, second, or third offence unless something very nasty has been done, and not always then. The non-custodial options, such an adornment to civilised conversation, have fallen on to the sharp lines of the law like snow. They have rescued judges from their duty, the Exchequer from expenditure, the Home Office from the exertion of anything except ingenuity, the innocent, not-very-wealthy citizen from his physical security and peace of mind.

On the day when it becomes apparent that every

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, Sidney Hook, "The Rights of the Victims" (April 1972), and Professor Leon Radzinowicz's general summary, "Illusions about Crime & Justice" (Feb-March 1981).

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intimidatory theft will be met with certain imprisonment at the first conviction the crime figures will start to go down. It will only be a beginning: and it ought rationally to be accompanied by the creation of dereliction hostels on a substantial scale, the fostering of truly progressive ideas like the Barlinnie unit which handled James Boyle, together with the intelligent diversification of prisons for different sorts of offenders.

As an idea it is neither liberal nor illiberal, it is a condition precedent. Ready and assured withdrawal of criminals can, for ordinary citizens, be only the best of news. To a police force which has grown demoralised, the knowledge that it was engaged in a fight with resources vigorously deployed to finish what they had begun, could only mean a stronger purpose and far less cynicism.

Crime has risen, rises, and will rise. Until we respond by indexing the available space and money required for the secure housing of criminals—in much the way that, say, the earnings of Home Office civil servants are indexed against inflation—we shall get nowhere.

As I write, the inflation rate is, if only temporarily, down to 4.9%, something unimaginable to the exponential mind when it stood in the mid-1970s at 28%. Nobody *has* to despair. The present self-serving illusion of incapacity, held together by gimmicks like the suspended sentence, must go the way of "non-inflationary demand stimulation." A quantity theory of crime, willing to exert tight controls and to withdraw a greater proportion of offenders from circulation, must take over.

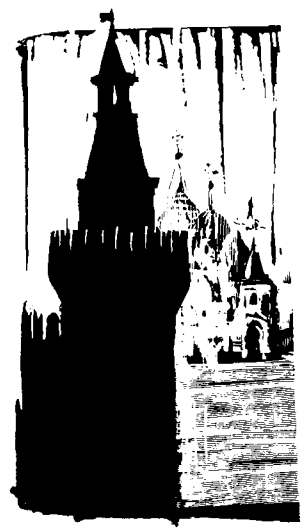
LET ME PREACH low motives. Sydney Smith, bidding the House of Lords to vote for the Reform Bill, said, "Do it for your rent roll, do it for your ease." Low motives are best, for that politician who first understands that by being seen to give tranquillity to those who have it no longer, he will win more support than by obtaining a Japanese GNP, will be the man to act. Ultimately, politicians are not re-elected and given landsides by academic seminars or dinner parties. The public which suffers most at present, though it has great dormant voting strength, is too unorganised, too inarticulate, ever to equal the lobby pressure exerted on behalf of a coalition of inertia and smart follies. And that coalition is itself of the Gog and Magog alliance between those who want to limit expenditure and those well-disposed towards offenders.

But the seas rise higher; and the next set of people to get hurt will be equipped to shout louder; five years from now and thirty years too late, government will respond. The Home Office is rarely more than a generation behind events.

An Interview

Remembering Maurice Thorez

By François Fejtö



PAUL THOREZ, born in Moscow in 1940, is the son of Maurice Thorez and Jeannette Vermeersch, and spent some of his childhood and adolescence in the Soviet Union. He looks remarkably like his father—if anything rather more the "*fils du peuple.*" His recently published memoir, *Les enfants modèles,* has been unanimously greeted (except by *L'Humanité*) as an exceptionally level-headed portrait of a privileged milieu in which "*les grands ducs*" (as Elsa Triolet nicknamed the three Thorez boys) were brought up. Paul Thorez has lost none of his respect and love for his father, even if he categorically rejects the Communist ideology.

—You describe in your book the holidays you spent in the famous "Artek", the model camp for model children set up on the Black Sea for the offspring of the upper crust of the Bolshevik régime. You say that you felt as if you were living in a kind of earthly paradise which prefigured the happiness of life under Communism—but then you began to have your doubts.

THOREZ: The doubts came later, with adolescence—to be exact, in 1956. That was the year of my sixteenth birthday, a difficult age, when you're trying to think for yourself. For birthday presents, I got the secret Khrushchev report, the Polish October, the Hungarian uprising and the crushing of it. In other words I saw everything I had worshipped till then go flying into smithereens. That was when I began to realise that there was a different Soviet Union from the one I'd known in the holiday camp, that island of the shining future, a kind of "California" created for the élite.

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—Did you ever talk to your father about it?

THOREZ: I hardly ever argued with him. In fact my brothers and I saw very little of him; and when we were together the subject of conversation was our various studies. It was either the Latin that my father had started learning at the age of 50, or it was music, or painting. Whenever he had the chance he used to take us on little semi-secret expeditions in France, Switzerland, Belgium, or England, and there he had us visit churches and cathedrals. Those were the pinnacles of culture. My father would point out the beauties of the site, the architectural proportions, and the wealth of detail in Romanesque and Gothic sculpture. No one knows the name of the architects and sculptors who built these masterpieces—they are the products of a land, he used to tell us, the works of a nation's genius—and he admired the sum of anonymous labour which that represented.

—So the Maurice Thorez you admire is the self-taught man of culture. But he was also the head of a counter-state, le chef d'un Etat clandestin, *as you put it, and surrounded by a Stalinist personality cult. Did you never talk to him about that?*

THOREZ: As I was telling you, we never talked politics with him. He was too wrapped up in his work, and then in 1950, when I was ten, he became half-paralysed. We got into the habit of making life comfortable for him at home. He wanted a quiet family life with us, wanted to be a father among his children. He saw to it that we kept up our studies and were well behaved. He also wanted to communicate his insatiable thirst for knowledge and his admiration for creative people. It was with Louis Aragon, Pablo Picasso, and Pierre Joliot-Curie that my father had special relationships. He was completely fascinated by Picasso. In those days a sizeable fraction of the French intellectual élite tended to gravitate around the Communist Party. Often he used to take me to that big building called Notre Dame de la Vie where Picasso had his workshops. They weren't formal visits.

As for the security measures and the personality cult that surrounded Maurice Thorez, those were the living conditions created by the Party, which he had to submit to—he first, and then we with him. There was the Festival of *L'Humanité*, with gigantic portraits, and the way we were taken through the crowds, "*les enfants de Maurice*", just like little princes, like the English princes that everybody recognises—Ooh, there's Prince Edward. . . .

HOW WOULD YOU RATE *your father's stature compared with the present Communist leadership?*

THOREZ: For me, Maurice Thorez is an historical Communist figure like Gramsci or Togliatti. They don't come like that any more. They were the leaders of great mass parties, and they created those great movements. I believe that my father remains in the collective mind of the French people rather as he appeared at the *Libération*—I don't say they occupy the same position, but in those days it was de Gaulle *and* Thorez. For a great many Frenchmen, Thorez was a charismatic leader—whereas Georges Marchais is a clown.

—Yet it does seem that Thorez actually felt flattered by the expressions of the personality cult that focused on him.

THOREZ: I can tell you that some of that cultism got on his nerves. He was annoyed by the way the Russians would remove a town's old name and replace it with the name of some famous member of the leadership. They changed Nijny Novgorod to Gorki, and Perm to Molotov. So the day we found out that Chistiakovo in the Donets Basin was to have its name changed to Thorez, I imagine my father must have chuckled in his grave.

—Fortunately there have been a number of falls-from-grace that enabled towns like Voroshilovgrad and Molotov to get back their traditional names. . . .

THOREZ: My father was irritated by episodes like that, but he didn't take them seriously. For me, they are evidence of a kind of collective paranoia. For me it was a very serious thing, this business of overturning geography, annihilating people and events, this claim to have the final say about all history.

—Did your father speak Russian?

THOREZ: He knew Russian very well, and spoke it with a strong French accent. He started learning it even before the War, and during the War (which, as you know, he spent in the Soviet Union) he perfected it. He read in the original not only Lenin but also the classics of Russian literature—Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky. He also spoke German.

—What was this game called "gorotki" *that you played with your neighbour Khrushchev's guests?*

THOREZ: It's a game the Russians like playing, as we like playing *pétanque* in France. It involves pieces of wood that you use to build different figures, and then you stand some way away and throw another piece of wood very hard to knock everything down. It's a game of skill and strength. One day I lost against Marshal Zhukov and Gomulka, but then again at *boule* I won against

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Gierek. That was in the summer of 1959. We had spent our holidays in a house near Khrushchev's. Being neighbours, we used to invite each other over from time to time; the Khrushchevs gave us a Russian-style dinner, and we gave them a French meal when they came to our place. The Party sent us cheese and wine from Fauchon's [the exclusive Paris food shop].

—How did you view Khrushchev at that time, and how do you see him today?

THOREZ: He was different from the others. He was human. His tragedy was not having understood that there can't be any such thing as a liberal Communist Party. There can be no such thing as liberal Communism of the kind promised by the French and Italian Parties which have not had the experience of power. Wherever a Communist régime has come to power, whether in Czechoslovakia or in Poland, when the Party loses control the régime knows it's lost; then it proclaims that the "interests of socialism are in danger", and uses force to restore its own dictatorship. In every one of those countries, if people were left to live as they please and to elect the government of their choice, it's obvious that the Communist régime wouldn't last a day. That's why I am convinced that this talk of "Eurocommunism" and a liberal (or national) socialism is the final apologia, the last illusion—an illusion that threatens to cause immense pain to those who sincerely believe in it, and which is nothing but a piece of manipulation, pure and simple, by people who know the way things really are.

Signs of Life

Is that all? A slap
of tentacles, caterpillar crawl?

At midnight, it wakes up:
kitten softly pawing,
nuzzling for food in wet fur.

There is definitely something
alive under my skin,
doing another somersault—
which end is up?

My body becomes
its container—
wobbling, growing fuller—
the outline won't hold.

The insides are turning
inside out. A nurse shouts,
"Watch it rise!"
like a whale surfacing:
back arched, it hardens;
goes slack, underwater again.

Before dawn—lightening.
Lizard slithering
down the canal,
no longer unexplored:
this quickening.
The contents bring the form to life.

My body opening,
its head appears
ready for crowning:
world turning, split second, we scream.
You born. And I will never be the same.

Florence Elon

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Telmah

To the Sunderland Station—By TERENCE HAWKES

THE STORY BEGINS on a train proceeding from Leeds to Sunderland one Saturday evening in November 1917. On that train, a man is opening his mail. Among his letters he discovers a square envelope containing the issue of the *Modern Language Review* (Vol. XII, No. 4) for October 1917. Leafing through it, he finds himself attracted to a particular article and, "all unconscious of impending fate" as he puts it, begins to read.

The effect, to say the least, is odd. In fact, he later uses the term "overwhelming" and speaks of the experience as capable of throwing "any mind off its balance." The man was the Shakespearean scholar and critic John Dover Wilson, then aged 36. The article was by W. W. Greg and it was entitled "Hamlet's Hallucination."

The thrust of Greg's article lies in his clear perception that something goes badly wrong with Hamlet's plans right at the beginning of the scheme he has devised to test the veracity of his father's ghost. The Ghost claims that he has been murdered by his brother, Claudius. Hamlet has organised an entertainment in the form of a play, *The Mousetrap*, whose story is so close to that of the murder that Claudius, watching the play, is bound to reveal his guilt by his response to it. *The Mousetrap* opens with a dumb-show presenting the stark details of the murder. But Claudius fails to make any response at all.

The "full significance" of that, Greg argues, has never been appreciated. Claudius's failure to respond means, quite simply, that the Ghost has failed the test aimed at establishing its veracity. There is no doubt, of course, that Claudius has murdered King Hamlet. The doubts are as to the mode and method of the act—and in this respect the Ghost is clearly revealed, Greg says, to fall short as an "objective" reporter. He hasn't given Hamlet true information. The "orthodox view" of the play, which requires an objective truth-bearing Ghost, with Claudius properly indicted by its testimony as the dastardly poisoning villain of the story, ignores or tries to think "around" the dumb show. It argues, say, that the King and Queen are in close conversation at the time and so pay no attention to what is going on. This explanation, says Greg, "is indeed a lame one": it treats the play as "history", not drama. Such critics inquire "why Hamlet behaved in a ridiculous way, when the question they should have asked was why Shakespeare did—or whether he did."

For Greg, the "extraordinary nature" of the dumb show needs to be grasped. If we do so, we can see how genuinely upsetting Claudius's negative response is. Its effect is to "promote" Claudius: to make him more intriguing, his actions and his motives more complex. He becomes a *victim* of the Ghost's malicious reportage as much as a moustache-twirling villain in terms of the way the play is usually seen. In fact, he acquires a standing much more appropriate to the play's nomination of him as Hamlet's "mighty opposite": an impressive figure of potentially tragic stature. On the basis of the orthodox Hamlet-centred interpretation of the play, Claudius's response to the dumb show "not merely threatens the logical structure of one of the most crucial scenes of the play, but reduces it to meaningless confusion." As a result, Greg concludes, "we have to choose between giving up Shakespeare as a rational playwright, and giving up our inherited beliefs regarding the story of *Hamlet*."

Sixty-five years later, something of the panache of Greg's argument still communicates itself to us, though its potential as light reading for a Yorkshire Saturday night and Sunday morning might perhaps be a matter for dispute. What cannot be disputed is its effect on Dover Wilson. I have described this as odd: a better phrase might be "seriously disturbing", even "mind-blowing." He himself describes it as "an intensely felt experience" which resulted in "a state of some considerable excitement." It filled him, he reports, with "a sort of insanity", and cast upon him, in his own words of eighteen years later, "a spell which changed the whole tenor of my existence, and still dominates it in part." Give up Shakespeare as a rational playwright indeed! Give up our inherited beliefs! Having read the article "half a dozen times before reaching Sunderland", an almost Pauline sense of mission seems to have descended: "from the first [I] realised that I had been born to answer it."

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WHY SUCH A HEATED RESPONSE to an article in a learned journal? And why—perhaps more interestingly—is it recorded in such detail eighteen years later, as part of the prolegomena to Dover Wilson's book *What Happens in Hamlet* (1935)?

We might, of course, pick up the not-quite-covert hint that the response is itself engagingly Hamlet-like. Dover Wilson describes what he calls his own "spiritual condition" at the time as "critical, not to say dangerous, a condition in which a man becomes converted, falls in love, or gives way to a mania for wild speculation." The War had its pressures, we are given to understand, and it perhaps did not seem inappropriate—it might even seem appealing—that a personality so highly charged might experience a reaction to such a situation which could be (as another critic was to put it of *Hamlet*) "in excess of the facts as they appear." Of course, a lot depends on how the facts are made to appear.

We can begin with the fact that, in November 1917, the War was not the only source of deep-seated disturbance in the world. On any of the Saturdays in that month, news of the impending or actual Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was likely to have been competing with news from the fronts. We have Dover Wilson's own statement that "I found it difficult to concentrate upon anything unconnected with the War", and also his comment that, spending a lot of his time in trains, ". . . the hours of travel were mostly occupied in reading the newspapers . . . ."

A glance at the newspapers of November 1917 confirms that the Bolshevik action received wide coverage, and one could reasonably assume Dover Wilson's awareness of the events from that. On Saturday 3 November, *The Times* reported "Persistent rumours in Petrograd of the imminence of armed action by the Maximalists [i.e. Bolsheviks] whose object is to seize the supreme power." The *coup* actually took place on Wednesday-Thursday, 7-8 November (by the Russian calendar, this was 25-26 October). On Friday 9 November, extensive reports appeared in *The Times* ("Anarchy in Petrograd: Power Seized by Lenin . . . .") with editorial comment of a predictable nature: ". . . the most extreme party in the Soviet appears to be in power . . . it is assuredly not the authentic voice of Russia." By Saturday 10 November, what *The Times* was then calling "The Lenin Revolution" was fully reported, together with an extensive account of what the headlines termed "Siege of the Winter Palace", and on both Saturday 17 November and Saturday 24 November there appeared lengthy reports headed "Civil Strife in Petrograd", "Russia's Starving Armies", etc. It would have been difficult for a newspaper reader to be unaware of these events.

It adds a dimension to the picture, and gives something of an edge to what we may presume to be the *quality* of Dover Wilson's awareness, if we take into account the nature of the mission on which he was currently engaged: his reason, that is, for being on that particular train at that particular time.

Dover Wilson's main employment then was as a school inspector for the Board of Education, stationed at Leeds. But, in common with other inspectors, he was also from time to time used in some war work: specifically, as an inspector for the Ministry of Munitions. The reason why he was travelling to Sunderland had to do with that work, and with a particular crisis concerning it. "Some trouble", as he decorously puts it, "had arisen with local trade-union officials" in Sunderland, and Dover Wilson had been urgently dispatched there to sort it out.

IT IS WORTH reminding ourselves that the Ministry of Munitions presented at that time an unusual and, to some, a rather dangerous spectacle in terms of British labour relations. The pressures of the War (including the arrival of women workers) had created a situation in which, to use A. J. P. Taylor's words, the local shop-stewards "were often revolutionary socialists . . . some of them were opposed to the war." This meant that they found themselves frequently in conflict with "official" and conservative trade union policy, since they represented a much wider working-class interest in the face of it. Ministers such as Lloyd George and, by 1917, Churchill were forced to work "hand in hand with the revolutionary shop-stewards" despite "growls of protest" from the unions.[1]

For "trouble" to occur at any time in the munitions industry was obviously bad enough. Negotiations at local level with what were later indeed called "Bolshevik" shop-stewards must have been, if you'll pardon the expression, a potentially explosive business. Such trouble occurring in November 1917 would certainly have had a capacity for uncontrolled detonation more than sufficient to generate a "critical, not to say dangerous" condition (the submerged metaphor is of impending combustion) in a man about to be ignited by a copy of the *Modern Language Review*.

Insurrection was in the air. On the first day of the Bolshevik *coup* (7 November), speaking, by chance, in the House of Lords, the Marquess of Salisbury had warned that

> "The governing classes hitherto had been inclined to regard the working class as a sort of dangerous animal of enormous strength and great potential violence, which it was necessary to be very civil to, but never to trust."

In short, the revolutionary proposals of Greg's article on *Hamlet* must have fallen into a powder

[1] A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-45* (1965), p. 39.

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keg of a mind already in some degree prepared to be "blown" into "a sort of insanity" by them just as, in the wider context towards which the Leeds–Sunderland train seemed to be speeding, certain events were already shaking the world.

BEFORE DISMISSING THIS VIEW as one which makes far too much out of a mere coincidence of dates, certain other aspects of what is really rather a complex situation should be borne in mind. First, it is Dover Wilson himself who gives all the facts, as it were compulsively, in a "letter" entitled "The Road to Elsinore, being an Epistle Dedicatory to Walter Wilson Greg" which prefaces his highly influential book *What Happens in Hamlet*. The apparently immodest, unreserved commitment to total exposition of that book's title lends its own confessional, bean-spilling air to the letter, and of course vice versa.

The literary device of the publicly printed letter has always exploited means of communication generated by its paradoxical mode. As a document whose standing is both private and public at the same time, it "means" both by what it is seen to offer, in confidence, and by what it is seen to withhold, in public. It operates, that is to say, both directly, by intimate revelation, and indirectly, by evident obfuscation and suppression. The two methods of signifying are equated and intimately involved. What it says and what it does not say, its utterances and its silences, are both meaningful: each is an aspect of the other. In *this* letter, the overt commitment is to the whole truth. Greg is told "you may have guessed something of this, but you cannot know it all." The letter will thus tell all. It will explain "the origin and purpose of this book", take us to the source of what happened before *What Happens in Hamlet* happened, and thus lead us, in effect, to the root cause of its writing. That origin is precisely, specifically and insistently dated in a spirit of "classic realism": "It begins some time in the November of 1917 . . . I reached home one Saturday evening to find an urgent telephone message awaiting me. . . ." The related, concomitant silence, however, is no less insistent. There is absolutely no mention before or after of the Bolshevik Revolution.

I think we can regard that silence as resonant, and not simply because of the interest of the Revolution itself, or because of any potential connection, however oblique, between it and Dover Wilson's current journey (Sunderland lacks a Winter Palace, but things have to start somewhere). It could be seen as finally a matter of discourse. The discourse of literary criticism in Britain and America, then and now, tends to exclude the area of politics as not overtly appropriate to itself and its purposes. It would seem literally unreasonable for a literary critic to take such issues on board as, no doubt, it seems unreasonable for me to do so now.

But the truth is that Dover Wilson had to hand, and was perfectly capable of using, another discourse designed exactly for that purpose. There is, it seems to me, great significance in respect of the way discourses operate in the fact that he makes no mention of the Bolshevik Revolution. For it means that no connection is drawn between it and his present highly emotional state by a man who had lived within the Russian Empire (in Finland) for three years, who by his own account had become, on his return to Britain, "a well known public lecturer" on the subject of Russia, who was currently, as he writes to Greg, making "fitful and unsuccessful attempts to learn Russian", and who on more than one previous occasion had written coolly, seriously, and at length about exactly this possibility of revolution in Russia and its likely consequences.

IN 1906, DOVER WILSON'S article "The Aims and Methods of the Social Revolutionary Party in Russia" appeared in *The Independent Review* (Vol. XI, pp. 137–50). It begins by making my central point for me: that a revolution in Russia (he is referring of course to the revolution of 1905) must be an event of considerable significance for Western Europe and that there can be no excuse for any suppression of awareness of it:

> "The newspapers have been undeniably generous in the space devoted to the 'Russian Revolution', and no Englishman has any excuse for being ignorant of the fact that, from one end to the other of the great eastern plain of Europe which we agree to call Russia, a gigantic civil war is now being waged—a war which must to a large extent determine the destinies not only of Russia, but also of Europe as a whole."

The piece goes on to make what, even to entirely unsophisticated eyes, seems a somewhat oversimple analysis of Russia's political structure. "Russia possesses only two revolutionary factions of any real importance: the Social Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats." But, naive or not, the future reader of Greg's revolutionary proposals concerning *Hamlet* leaves us in no doubt that, of those factions, the programme of the Social Revolutionaries is infinitely preferable to that advanced by the Social Democrats. The latter, being "founded on the theories of a German doctrinaire", can have no success in the face of the former, whose Fabian mode especially recommends it and ensures, for Dover Wilson, that it finds its basis in "real Russian institutions." The future of the country thus "clearly lies with the Social Revolutionaries"—a situation confirmed by the fact that the

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wretched Social Democrats had recently split into two parties, the Minority and the Majority, thus demonstrating their hopelessness. These two factions could confidently be consigned to outer darkness and forgotten. The Social Revolutionaries—whose policy of terrorism Dover Wilson explains, condones, and approves (he says it seems to be having "a distinctly beneficial result")—win his support, for "the future of their country lies with them."

Everybody makes mistakes, and a man who has espoused the cause of the Social Revolutionary party so wholeheartedly—even to the extent of condoning its commitment to terrorism—and who has so roundly dismissed the claims of the competing Social Democrats, whether Menshevik (as the Minority group was called) or Bolshevik (as the Majority group was called), a man who has uttered so confidently might reasonably and significantly fall silent on the subject.

IN FACT, Dover Wilson committed himself yet again to the same issue in 1914. In a piece called "Russia and her Ideals" in *The Round Table* for December of that year (Vol. 5, No. 17, pp. 103–35), he offers, in his own words, to correct prejudices: to look Russia "straight in the eyes, that we may hope to catch a glimpse of her soul." The glimpse reveals, he assures us, a deep craving for order, arising out of a constant struggle for self-preservation. Autocracy comes almost naturally to be the only form of government for such a society: "A State whose very existence is perpetually at stake, for whom discipline is the primary need, has really no choice but to place itself in the hands of an imperator, a Caesar, a Tsar." As a result, autocracy in Russia is best seen as "part of religion itself", with the Czar as God's "representative upon earth." Anything more complex, he concludes, would only puzzle the Russians, for Czardom is more than autocracy in their case; it is theocracy. And he adds, with the confidence of one who has gazed straight in the eyes of the teeming millions, "As both it is intensely representative of the national mind and character."

The principle of autocracy, he continues, is thus the only principle that mind and that character can understand, and it would therefore be wrong to countenance any disturbance of it. Autocracy, he assures us—in 1914—

> "still has a long life before it and much work to perform in Russia. It is therefore wiser to face the facts and to recognize that the Tsardom is after all Russia's form of democracy . . . it is the kind of government the people understand and reverence, and it is their only protection against the tyranny of an aristocratic clique . . . when the will of the autocrat is clearly and unmistakably

MISSION on the RHINE
"Reeducation" and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany
JAMES F. TENT
In this meticulously researched study, Tent recreates the ambivalence, problems, and conflicts that attended the American Military Government's efforts at reeducation and denazification in occupied Germany. Tent, who has drawn on an wealth of recently declassified documents, tells this story from an insider's point of view. In so doing he sheds light on the nature of America's occupation experience as a whole: on the dilemma of balancing the need for a political purge against the need to rehabilitate a disrupted society, and on the extent to which a democratic society can impose its ideals upon another people. A Chicago Original in paperback, March, £10.40.
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expressed, it has always been found to correspond with the needs of the people. . . ."

Those who asked "How wrong can you be?" of Dover Wilson's 1906 article are partly answered here. You can be *much* wronger. But the piece is certainly not without interest on another level. World-picture fanciers will already have recognised in it a version of what, by the time of the Second World War, had become a standard British response to national crisis: the construction of long-past, green, alternative worlds of percipient peasants, organic communities, festivals, folk-art, and absolute monarchy to set against present chaos. Dover Wilson's revised Russian World Picture of 1914 has developed, since his essay of 1906, features which surface regularly in our century as part of a recurrent siege mentality. It thus has much more than a coincidental resemblance to E. M. W. Tillyard's well-known war-effort of 1943, *The Elizabethan World Picture*. A discourse which, seeking for the final, confirming presence of authority, nominates the linchpin of the political structure as "God's representative on earth" is clearly heard in both.[2] Each represents less an accurate picture of the world it purports to describe than an intimate, covert measure of its author's fears about the fallen world in which he currently lives, and in the face of which he has constructed a peculiarly English Eden.

IT ISN'T JUST a question of getting it wrong, wronger, or wrongest. The point is that the decided modification in Dover Wilson's views about Russia which takes place between 1906 and 1914—moving from an early commitment to Fabianism to a subsequent rejection of it in favour of Czarism—represents a serious narrowing of options, a growing sense of urgency, and a harder and harder line. And it is thus a modification which, given the previous confidence about insights into "national mind and character", must have lent the *actual* events of November 1917, when they occurred, the quality of a nightmare, turning them into a horror of such proportions that perhaps no overt response to them was possible.

This is what I mean when I say that the absence of any mention of the Bolshevik Revolution in Dover Wilson's account of his train journey strikes me as significant. It signifies, of course, that the Bolshevik Revolution *is* in effect being responded to, coped with, in that "intensely felt experience", that "spell which changed the whole tenor of my existence", and that "sort of insanity" provoked by Greg's article on *Hamlet*.

Greg's attack, after all, is on the smooth surface of the play, seen as the product of Shakespeare the "rational playwright", but effectively, of course, created by an "orthodox" interpretation which seeks for unity, progression, coherence and, if possible, sequential ordering in all art, as part of a ruthless and rigorous process of domestication. There is no obvious way of placating Greg's objections to that sort of *Hamlet*, for they constitute a frontal assault on what he terms the "inherited beliefs"—that brand of literary Czarism—which reinforce and sustain it. And the assault is certainly not Fabian in character. It is directly, violently, Bolshevik.

DOVER WILSON'S DEFENCE took various forms. There was an immediate diagnostic response to the editor of the *Modern Language Review* in the form of a postcard dispatched upon alighting from the train at Sunderland, which went so far as to nominate Greg as an unwitting agent of the arch-revolutionary himself: "Greg's article devilish ingenious but damnably wrong", it twinkled, and offered a rejoinder, which duly appeared.

There followed two major salvoes: the edition of *Hamlet* prepared by Dover Wilson for the New Cambridge Shakespeare in 1934—a series of which he had become joint General Editor in 1921, provoked into the role, he says, by Greg's article—and the book *What Happens in Hamlet*, which purports to release him from thrall to the problem, by telling all. Those interested in the details of his argument can pursue them there. Suffice it to say that I do not myself find them convincing, so much as replete with the charm and ingenuity of the truly desperate. To suggest that Claudius does not notice the dumb-show, engaged as he is in conversation with Polonius and Gertrude, seeks to "naturalise" the situation out of existence. The further suggestion that the Players (a burlesque of Edward Alleyn and Shakespeare's rivals the Lord Admiral's Men) constitute a kind of surly trade union, engaged in a dispute with their temporary boss, Hamlet, which provokes an unlooked-for work-to-rule, resulting in an unauthorised dumb-show as embarrassing to Hamlet as it is ineffective in respect of Claudius, so nearly proves my own point for me that I hesitate to use it, although connoisseurs will find it on pp. 153–63 of *What Happens in Hamlet*.

But if these represent Dover Wilson's defence against Bolshevism in its specifically displaced Shakespearean form, it is possible also to suggest that the same battle was subsequently taken up on a

[2] In 1914, Dover Wilson also contributed, together with R. W. Seton-Watson, Alfred L. Zimmern and Arthur Greenwood, to a volume called *The War and Democracy* (Macmillan, 1914). In a chapter devoted to a comprehensive overview of Russia, he wrote of "the grand simple life they lead in the fields, a life of toil indeed but of toil sweet and infinitely varied", etc. The Russians, he claims, have achieved Democracy, have virtually realised all the principles of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, and indeed can be said to have "discovered the secret of existence."

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broader front by the same combatant. Two years later, in May 1919, a Departmental Committee was appointed by the President of the Board of Education to investigate what was termed "The Teaching of English in England." Its terms of reference were

> "To inquire into the position occupied by English (Language and Literature) in the educational system of England, and to advise how its study may best be promoted in schools of all types, including Continuation Schools, and in Universities and other Institutions of Higher Education, regard being had to—
>
> 1. the requirements of a liberal education;
> 2. the needs of business, the professions, and public services; and
> 3. the relation of English to other studies."

The Committee's chairman was Sir Henry Newbolt, and prominent among its members was John Dover Wilson.

MANY THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID about the Newbolt Report, as the published findings of the Committee became known. The first point to stress is that it was widely influential. It was snapped up, in Dover Wilson's words, "like a best-seller", and it can be said effectively to have shaped the nature of "English" as the academic subject we know today. Its spiritual father is Matthew Arnold, its spiritual son F. R. Leavis. Its two central concerns—more or less overt—are related political ones: social cohesion in the face of potential disintegration and disaffection; and nationalism, the encouragement of pride in English national culture on a broader front.

The common coin of its discourse is generated by concepts we have already encountered: those of "national mind and character." English, in this light, is presented as "the only basis possible for a national education", being not merely the medium of our thought, but "the very stuff and process of it. It is itself the English mind." An education based on English would thus have a "unifying tendency", acting as an antidote to the divisiveness, the "bitterness and disintegration", of a class-dominated society. It would heal one of the major causes of "division amongst us": the "undue narrowness of the ground on which we meet for the true purposes of social life" (without specifying what those might be). Recognising that we are "not one nation but two", the study of English is capable of bridging, if not closing, the "chasm of separation", the "mental [sic] distances between classes." Offering a "bond of union between classes", it would "beget the right kind of national pride."

The Committee was in effect responding to the

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sort of view promoted by Lloyd George, when the War ended. Speaking at Manchester in September 1918, he had put the case that:

> "The most formidable institution we had to fight in Germany was not the arsenals of Krupps or the yards in which they turned out submarines, but the schools of Germany. They were our most formidable competitors in business and our most terrible opponents in war. An educated man is a better worker, a more formidable warrior, and a better citizen."

The Education Acts of 1918 (Fisher Act) and 1944 (Butler Act) are testimony to the fact that in Britain the threat of external disruption is usually the parent of educational change: certainly by 1919 events outside the United Kingdom had evidently carried a clear enough message to ministers within it. If there was a breathless hush in the close of Europe, it was not inappropriate that a committee chaired by Sir Henry Newbolt (for it is he) should be urging us, through the study of English language and literature, to "play up, play up, and play the game."

Members of the Committee were allotted areas of special concern and among those assigned to Dover Wilson, he later tells us, was the one which appears in the report as Sections 232–38, "Literature and the Nation." The thrust of these pages is that teaching literature to the working class is a kind of "missionary work", whose aim is to stem the tide of that class's by then evident disaffection. The missionary to Sunderland clearly sees that workers need to be embraced in the larger way of British life, and he leaves us in no doubt that this is a matter "involving grave national issues" to which the committee has given "much anxious thought."

Workers, such "thought" urges, ought to feel that there is a national culture to which they can belong, and literature is offered as an instrument for promoting social cohesion in place of division. Its political role is quite clear:

> "Literature, in fact, seems to be classed by a large number of thinking working men with anti-macassars, fish-knives and other unintelligible and futile trivialities of 'middle-class culture,' and, as a subject of instruction, is suspect as an attempt 'to side-track the working-class movement.' We regard the prevalence of such opinions as a serious matter, not merely because it means the alienation of an important section of the population from the 'confort' and 'mirthe' of literature, but chiefly because it points to a morbid condition of the body politic which if not taken in hand may be followed by lamentable consequences. For if literature be, as we believe, an embodiment of the best thoughts of the best minds, the most direct and lasting communication of experience by man to men, a fellowship which 'binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time,' then the nation of which a considerable portion rejects this means of grace, and despises this great spiritual influence, must assuredly be heading to disaster."

As another member of the Committee put it (George Sampson, in *English for the English*, preface to 1925 edn): "Deny to working class children any common share in the immaterial and presently they will grow into the men who demand with menaces a communism of the material."

THE SPECTRE OF a working class demanding material goods with menaces, losing its national mind, besmirching its national character, clearly had a growing capacity to disturb after the events of 1917, particularly if that class, as Dover Wilson writes in the Newbolt Report, sees education "mainly as something to equip them to fight their capitalistic enemies. In the words of one young worker, 'Yes, what you say is all right—but will that sort of stuff bring us more bread and cheese?'."

To Dover Wilson—and to many others subsequently—the solution lay quite clearly in the sort of nourishment that English Literature offered: the snap, crackle and pop of its roughage a purgative force of considerable political power—not because it has a direct influence on what Dover Wilson (and others) called "the social problem", but because of its indirect influence on what they certainly did not call ideology, but which is clearly signalled as such in the report's references to a general, indeed a national, "state of mind." If the "state of mind" is orientated wholly towards the "social problem", the result is an unhealthy imbalance:

> "This state of mind is not a new thing in history, and even goes back as far as Plato. It finds a parallel in the contempt for 'poets, pipers, players, jesters and such-like caterpillars of the commonwealth' expressed by puritans of the 16th and 17th centuries, and in the hostility towards the 'culture of capitalism' now prevalent in Bolshevist Russia."

That hostility, that Bolshevism, is apparently best met by strengthening the character, through massive doses of poetry administered by a solicitous education system:

> ". . . we believe that, if rightly presented, poetry will be recognized by the most ardent social reformers as of value, because while it contributes no specific solution of the social problem it endows the mind with power and sanity; because, in a word, it enriches personality."

Personality! The very word is like a bell. The ideological position this signals—the commitment to individualism as a long-term solution to the social

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problem—is a familiar one, and it remains the long-term position from which most teaching of literature is still mounted. Its political, economic and social implications are clearly spelled out in the Newbolt Report, and most clearly in those parts of the report that we know were written by Dover Wilson. The impulse generating that position, the stimulus to which it is a considered response, lies in the events which took place in Russia in November 1917, and the subsequent sense of betrayal experienced by the Allies in the face of the consequent German spring offensive of 1918 which nearly won the war for the Kaiser.

MY POINT IS a simple one. Dover Wilson's response to Greg's article on that train to Sunderland in 1917 is an excellent example of the sort of interaction between literary interpretation and political and social concerns that always pertains, but which normally remains covert in our culture. To make it overt is to draw attention to the genuinely subversive nature of Greg's observation. For he indicates nothing less than a disquieting absence of coherence and stability at a key point in what, for English-speaking culture, ranks as a central and monumental text.

In this vein, a broader look at the play is hardly reassuring. We inherit, after all, a particular notion of *Hamlet* as a coherent story which runs a satisfactory, linear, sequential course from a firmly established and well-defined beginning, through a clearly placed and signalled middle, to a causally related and logically determined end which, planted in the beginning, develops or grows organically out of it. Yet those certainties crumble at a touch.

An opposite recursive movement, a looking backwards, a sense of revision or re-interpretation, the running of events over again, out of their time-sequence, ranks, in fact, as a fundamental aspect of *Hamlet*. *Subsequence, posteriority*: these are the effective modes even of the opening. It is that which generates phrases like "has this thing appeared *again* tonight", and more explicitly Marcellus's "Thus *twice before* and jump at this dead hour hath he gone by our watch", which eventually provoke the great retailing of past events offered by Horatio as preface to the Ghost's second appearance. Then, as a sort of climax of this revising, there is Claudius's great revisionary proposal, his reinterpretation of the past which leads up to his own present position:

> Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
> The memory be green, and that it us befitted
> To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
> To be contracted in one brow of woe . . . .

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Throughout, it seems to me, the audience of *Hamlet* might legitimately feel that it is being buttonholed, cajoled, persuaded by participants in the play to look back, to "revise", to "see" things again in particular ways, to "read" or interpret them along specific lines and to the exclusion of others. It is a procedure notoriously mocked by Hamlet himself at the expense of Polonius in a famously deconstructive moment:

HAMLET: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in the shape of a camel?
POLONIUS: By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.
HAMLET: Methinks it is like a weasel.
POLONIUS: It is backed like a weasel.
HAMLET: Or like a whale.
POLONIUS: Very like a whale.

—and easily its most memorable manifestation occurs when the Ghost buttonholes the Prince with a peculiarly insistent version of the murder:

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard.
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment. . . .

These slow-motion "action-replays" of past events become a feature of the play. It seems constantly to "revise" itself in this way, and this serves to pull back against any progressive movement which it might otherwise appear to instigate. The result is that the sense of straight, purposive, linear motion forward through the play finally evaporates as we sense an opposing movement, a circularity, an iterative, cyclical current.

IN SO FAR AS that current seeks to roll the play backwards, reinforcing its recursive mode, making it move only unwillingly and haltingly forward, constantly, even as it does so, looking over its own shoulder, then I propose to recognise it and, for the sake of convenience and argument to name it in relation to *Hamlet*. I call it *Telmah*: *Hamlet* backwards.

The most obvious backward-looking action-replay occurs right in the middle of *Hamlet* where, of course, we find another play and the moment upon which Greg's article focuses. *The Mousetrap* marks *Hamlet*'s most recursive point. More than a play-within-a-play, it offers a replay-of-a-replay. It replays in its action (truly an action-replay) the Ghost's replay of its own murder.

If it looks backwards for this purpose, it also looks forward towards the future. It functions, as Hamlet himself says, "tropically": that is, as both trope or metaphor, and as the "tropic" or turning-point of *Hamlet*. The play's linear progression, its designation of Claudius as villain, depends on its ability to bolt a particular version of the past firmly to the present and the future. Hamlet himself is confident: he has written part of the play and he is"as good as a chorus" in interpreting it. He seems committed, purposive, moving inexorably to a predetermined end. *The Mousetrap* begins pointedly enough, with the brutal clarity of the dumb-show. And then, as Greg notices, the Prince's plans suddenly all go wrong. *The Mousetrap* becomes "tropical" indeed. *Hamlet* "turns" decisively. It turns, for the moment, into *Telmah*.

I am not suggesting that we can approach *Hamlet* by recognising *Telmah*, or that *Telmah* is the real play, obscured by *Hamlet*. That would be to try to reconcile, to bring to peace, to *appease* a text whose vitality resides precisely in its plurality: in the fact that it frequently, and here evidently, contradicts itself and strenuously resists our attempts to resolve, to domesticate that contradiction. I am trying to suggest that its contradiction has positive value: not least in that a pondering of some of the attempts that have been made to resolve it, to make the play speak coherently, reveals the political, economic and social forces to which all such "interpretation" is respondent and in whose name it is inevitably, if covertly, made. I am not suggesting an "alternative" reading of *Hamlet*, because that would be to fall into the same trap. I offer the title of *Telmah* as what it is: a sense of an ever-present potential challenge and contradiction *within* and *implied by* the text that we name *Hamlet*.

In this sense, *Telmah* coexists with, is coterminous with *Hamlet*, in a way that must strike us as, finally, impossible. A thing, we are taught, cannot be both what it is and another thing. But that is precisely the principle challenged by *Telmah*. Our notion that it cannot coexist with *Hamlet* marks the limit, I suggest, of our historically determined, Eurocentric ideas of "sense", of "order", and of "point of view." That Eurocentricity lies behind and validates a limited notion of "interpretation" which will allow us to have *Hamlet* in various guises, and will also, as an alternative, allow clever and sophisticated interpreters to have, say, *Telmah*. But it will not allow us to have both, because that would explode our notion of the single and unified "point of view" whose "authority" as that term suggests, derives from its source, the author.

And yet we only have to step beyond the shores of Europe to encounter a quite different notion of interpretation which will allow exactly what I propose: the sense of the text as a site, or an arena of conflicting and often contradictory potential interpretations, no one or group of which can claim "intrinsic" primacy or "inherent" authority, and all of which are always ideological in nature and subject to extrinsic political and economic determinants.

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THE ABSTRACT MODEL I reach for is that of jazz music: that black American challenge to the Eurocentric idea of the author's or the composer's authority. For the jazz musician, the "text" of a melody is a means, not an end. Interpretation in that context is not parasitic but symbiotic in its relationship with its object. Its role is not limited to the service, or the revelation, or the celebration of the author's/composer's art. Quite the reverse: interpretation *constitutes* the art of the jazz musician.

The same unservile principle seems to me to be appropriate to the critic's activity.[3] Criticism is the major, in its largest sense it is the *only*, native American art. Complaints about America's lack of original creativity in the arts miss this point. Responding to, improvising on, "playing" with, recreating, synthesising and interpreting "given" structures of all kinds, political, social, aesthetic—these have historically constituted the transatlantic mode in our century and before it, to an extent that might now force us to recognise that criticism makes Americans of us all.

CONFRONTED BY a manifestation of *Telmah*, by disruption and contradiction in the normally smooth and explainable surface of a text that our society has appropriated as a manifestation of great (and thus reassuring) art, we have seen that Dover Wilson responds with a vigour and an emotionally charged nervous energy appropriate to it as what it must have seemed to him to be: an attack on the structure of civilisation as we know it—an attack on our ideology. His sensitivity to overt political offensives—manifested in his articles on revolutionary Russia—fuels his response to *Telmah*, which he rightly senses as potentially revolutionary in ideological terms. Today *Hamlet*, tomorrow the world!

As a member of the Newbolt Committee, Dover Wilson insists on the proper, controlled study of literature as essential to a society wishing to avoid the alien barbarities of Bolshevism and to preserve the "national mind and character"—i.e. the integral and coherent structures of a British way of life. Years later, writing on the work of the Workers Educational Association, he comments that, but for its classes, "the abysmal disillusion that followed the end of the First World War . . . might well have resulted in revolution." *Telmah*'s proposed reversal, its up-turning, topsy-turvy mode (in which the ghosts of one's fathers are not to be trusted) would undoubtedly have come hard to one whose very name invokes the clear, defining boundaries of an established island culture. Any threatened incursion would therefore have to face the determined opposition of those impregnable white cliffs, and the forces assembled—indeed, symbolised by—the figure of Sir Henry Newbolt.

Names, after all, are invested with potency. Dover Wilson's autobiography is entitled *Milestones on the Dover Road* and thus half-humorously hints at his own eponymic standing while memorialising his role as a defender of our national mind, character and culture. His article of 1914, in favour of Czardom, is naturally anonymous. His earlier piece of 1906, with its efforts to bury Bolshevism, nevertheless offers an appealing recognition of the literally topsy-turvy function of revolution which I have tried weakly to hint at in my formulation of the name *Telmah*. Confronting Bolshevism, Dover Wilson unwittingly becomes its Greg. For what does that article do but argue that the spectre which is haunting Europe is certainly one not to be trusted? It would be pleasant to report that an intimate and deeply personal sense of revolution and reversal accompanied these efforts to heap oblivion on Bolshevism. I can, and do. The article is signed, not John Dover Wilson, but Wildover Johnson.

It would also be pleasant to conclude by turning back now to the play. But in a very serious sense, which I hope to have made clear, we cannot do so.

[3] This point has recently been brilliantly made and developed by Geoffrey Hartman in *Criticism in the Wilderness* (Yale University Press, 1980).

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There is no unitary, self-presenting play for us to turn back to, and I have no intention of turning myself inside out like Wildover Johnson in pursuit of a smoothed-over (or smooth Dover) interpretation of it that can then be offered gift-wrapped, as the truth. That kind of "appeasement" of the text can be said to have its own political analogues. And indeed . . . "Dear Dr Dover Wilson", begins a missive from Birmingham dated 7 June 1936:

> "I expect you will be rather surprised to get a letter from me as we have not been 'introduced'. But as we are both public characters perhaps we may dispense with formalities [6] . . . . I can't help telling you what immense pleasure I have had out of *What Happens in Hamlet*. I had asked for it as a Christmas present, and when it duly appeared I sat up several nights into the small hours reading it . . . When I had finished it, I did what I don't think I have ever done before with any book: I immediately read it all over again! And that won't be the last time of reading. . . ."

The letter was signed "Neville Chamberlain."

Square Tales from Languedoc

On Le Roy Ladurie—By JOHN BOSSY

WITH HIS NEW BOOK,[1] after the evergreen *Montaillou* and the worthy *Carnival*, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has taken to structuralism: that is to say, if I may risk a description, to the interpretation of works of culture by reference to sequential units, interior oppositions, motivic diagrams, and the concepts of homology (something being on the face of it in some respect the same as something else) and transformation (something which is not on the face of it the same as something else being treated as really the same as something else, since its present form may be regarded as a substitute for an underlying form which it has replaced). The gist of the matter seems to be a growing respect for culture in the Braudelian tradition to which Le Roy Ladurie belongs: an arrival at the idea that the proper description neither of, in this case, works of literature nor of social or other environments is advanced by treating the first as if they were products, as it were esparto grass, of the second.

Le Roy Ladurie makes rather heavy weather of this point in the course of criticising the achievements of his predecessors in the interpretation of the literature of Languedoc. Since most of them seem to have been unambitious *érudits de province*, this hammering of "village realism" seems uncalled-for; unless, that is, like the grandmother in his story, they are some sort of transformational version of his master Fernand Braudel. Anyway, since he is in the habit of referring to himself as just another *érudit de province, égaré* in the corridors of the *Collège de France*, perhaps one ought to call him an exponent of village structuralism; which, it seems, may take historical form in two modes. The first claims to lay bare the deep structure of a work, and to relate it with reasonable directness to deep structures claimed to be present in the historical environment in which it appears; you might call this structural realism. It was represented in *Montaillou*, where the deep structure of the *domus* perceived in the religious feelings and practice of Cathars was fairly directly related to the deep structure of the ecology of settlement in the region: it is to some extent represented in part one of *Love, Death and Money in the Pays d'Oc*. The second, what you might call structural idealism, relates the observed structure to similar pre-existent structures in other cultural artefacts, to which it is usually related by the process of transformation: it appears here in Part Two. At the end an attempt is made to relate them, but I did not find it awfully convincing, and I rather doubt if many readers will anyway have had the strength to get that far. For the book, while having somewhat different virtues from its predecessors, has rather a heavy dose of their vices: it is far too long, repeats the same information several times, and seems to bother little about art. The problem is worse here because the book is thick with structural diagrams, the text heavy with lists, inverted commas, underlinings and the rest. The story, however agreeable and evocative, palls at the *n*th repetition.

THAT SAID, it is a worthy effort, and ought to provoke a good deal of constructive thought. It is about three cultural items of different provenance, and about their connection. The first is a piece of popular fiction called *Jean-l'ont-Pris* (literally *Jean-they've-taken-him-away*) written in the *langue d'oc* in 1756 by a literary priest, Jean-Baptiste

[1] *Love, Death and Money in the Pays d'Oc*. By EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE. Translated by ALAN SHERIDAN. Scolar Press, £17.50.

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Fabre, and an established monument of the literature in that language. The second is the matrimonial conceptions of the people of the region. The third is a corpus of folk-tales based on the theme of a child who is given Death as a godparent, its origins, diffusion and development.

A translation of the story occupies thirty pages at the beginning of the book. A local nobleman meets a man on the road who is happy at just having buried his wife. To explain why, and the origins of his name, he recounts his parents' history. His father, called Truquette, had settled in the region as a cobbler, courted and married an illegitimate girl called Margot, who lived with her mother, a maker of matches. After a rowdy wedding feast, and a dispute between the couple, Truquette is advised by his grandmother to do something serious, and sets up as a receiver of stolen property; after a period of great family prosperity, he is arrested and hanged. Jean-l'ont-Pris, their baby, is deserted by his mother and brought by his grandmother. Despite more advice he fails to become respectable, plays truant from school, and takes to stealing from vineyards. He is caught by the vineyard-keepers eating peaches in the vineyard of a rich peasant, M. Sestier, and tied to a tree, but escapes leaving a boy, the son of one of the vineyard-keepers, tied up in his place. M. Sestier beats the boy and is in his turn beaten up by the vineyard-keepers. Jean-l'ont-Pris comes and helps him, and is given the job of vineyard-keeper in return.

He and his grandmother live well; she dies of it; he finds in the house a chest full of valuables concealed from his father's prosperous days. He sets his cap at M. Sestier's daughter, the plump and pretty Babeau; Sestier says he cannot marry her without 20,000 francs. He has it already in his grandmother's chest, but in order to appear to have gained it by honest toil asks for three years to raise it, which Sestier grants. However Sestier, who has got a repulsive girl called Judith Garouille pregnant, persuades her to declare that Jean-l'ont-Pris is the father. At Sestier's instigation he is arrested by three sinister figures, one of them an ex-associate of his father's called Quincarlot. Quincarlot tells him that he must marry Garouille, but that she will die in childbirth, which she does, leaving him with the dowry of 1,000 francs which Sestier had given her. Jean-l'ont-Pris then sets off back to claim Babeau, whom he has already made pregnant, and meets the baron on the road. The baron recommends a career of honesty and the return of his stolen property; Jean-l'ont-Pris demurs; they part at the baron's castle.

THE MATRIMONIAL CONCEPTIONS of the people of Languedoc entail the assumption that a man, to marry the girl he wants, must persuade her father (or similar figure) that he has adequate capital: the girl will be handed over in symbolic exchange, when he shows that he has it. In the literature of *langue d'oc*, where Le Roy Ladurie finds the model, the hero does not have the capital to start with, and the story is how he acquires it, and the girl, in the face of opposition from a rival who has, or of some obstacle of a similar sort. In the best stories he acquires it from one of the other three parties. This structure Le Roy Ladurie describes as the "Occitanian love square", the four corners being the opponent and the hero, the father and the daughter. He concedes that it is not peculiar to the region, but holds that for lack of other interests, for example in the affairs of state being transacted in far-off Paris or Versailles, it obsessed people there more exclusively than elsewhere. He traces its emergence, rather speculatively, in the 16th century; its disappearance, persuasively, to the onset of doom-laden romanticism in the 19th.

He also concedes that it is not identical with the actual matrimonial practice of Languedoc as evidenced in notaries' marriage contracts. For one thing, most couples will be of roughly the same status from the start, and there will be no plot. For another, in actual marriage negotiations there are two families involved, which is not typically the case in the story. Above all, whereas the key to the literature is the handing over of wealth, at least symbolically, from the man to the bride's father,

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the key to actual marriage negotiations is the handing over of wealth, in the form of a dowry, from the girl's father to the husband. True, things are not quite so simple as that, but there is clearly some distance between the imaginative model and the actual one. In estimating it Le Roy Ladurie invokes Clifford Geertz's distinction between a "model of" and a "model for", but this seems difficult to apply, since the literature doesn't seem to present any kind of ideal state of affairs to which real life ought to approximate. It is certainly more interesting than real life, and shows *virtù* in the hero; but that seems simply to mean that it is a story, and relates to that part of real life in which people tell stories, to themselves and others.

There is one possible alternative to this: perhaps Le Roy Ladurie has got the wrong model. If, instead of looking at notaries' archives, he had looked closer at the marriage rite, he might have found his basic structure more or less reproduced. Girl given by father or similar figure to man, who pays for her with a symbolic ring; man's relations not mentioned; the opponent, a hypothetical respondent to the priest's enquiry whether anybody knows of an impediment. There would certainly be objections to this idea, since the last parallel is rather weak and the marriage rite, in Languedoc as in England, had certainly advanced beyond this state at the period in question; indeed it was probably farther from it than it was (and is) in England. On the other hand, we know that details of the marriage rite could be a great source of popular reflection and fabulation, as in the case of the *aiguillette*, the anti-ring thought to be knotted by a malevolent person at the moment the couple's hands are joined, to ensure impotence and marital discord. Le Roy Ladurie has written about it elsewhere.

ONE ADVANTAGE of referring to this model would have been to bring closer together the two parts of the book, since the second part deals with just such a fabulation, in this case on the rite of baptism. One can see that the "love square," in so far as it provides a structure for the original story, only does so for the last part of it, (Sestier, father; Babeau, daughter; Jean-l'ont-Pris, hero; Garouille, impediment). You can certainly treat the rest as the story of how Jean-l'ont-Pris raises his capital, but there must be more to it than that. What that more is, according to Le Roy Ladurie, is, in its disguised form, the folk-tale *Godfather Death*.

This may be represented by a local version called *Jean-de-Trop* (Jean-one-too-many) collected towards the end of the 19th century. A poor man has a sixth child, cannot find a godparent for him, and eventually finds a man who turns out to be Jesus Christ. Christ arranges a feast for the baptism and arrives at it with the godmother, Death. Death promises the family 200 years' life, and prosperity in the meantime. When the child grows up, Death advises him to become a doctor: his diagnoses will be infallible since when he is at a sick-bed Death will appear to him at the head of the bed if the patient is going to die, at the foot if not. He cures the king's daughter, and marries her, but Death refuses to give her also 200 years of life; he succeeds in shutting Death up in a bottle and keeps her there until she agrees to give his wife the extra years. In this and other forms (Jean dies, Death is godfather, etc.) the story has a long history, beginning apparently in the Scandinavian Middle Ages; it was much used by preachers, well established in Germany by the 16th century, and apparently diffused from there through France and into Spain and thence to Latin America.

To cut a long story short, Le Roy Ladurie is claiming that *Jean-l'ont-Pris* is a conscious transformation, by the abbé Fabre, of this story. All sorts of relationships, some convincing, some less so, are adduced to prove this, but the fundamental one is the identification of Death the godmother, or godfather, with the grandmother in *Jean-l'ont-Pris*. The arguments for this are that in practice grandmothers were frequently godparents in the region, and when not so in fact were given the title (*marraine, meirino* in *langue d'oc*); that the grandmother's chest evokes that of the fairy godmother in *Cinderella;* and that once one has seen this equivalence a number of aspects of the story seem to fall into place. The arguments against it which occur to me are that there is no direct indication of it in the story; that the grandmother dies half-way through; and that she is described at one point as a Huguenot. If actual facts of life are relevant, as they seem to be, this is incompatible with godparenthood of a Catholic child, indeed of any child, since Huguenots did not have godmothers. A Huguenot might certainly fit into the same category of godmother as Death or a fairy, but she could surely not be your grandmother at the same time. Perhaps this is a quibble, but it worried me. The second objection (her death) is answered by claiming that Death is reincarnated in the figures of Quincarlot and the baron to whom the story is told;

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but this would surely make a hash of the story, since we should then have one figure representing death in paragraph one (the baron) and another (the grandmother) five paragraphs later, not to mention Margot, whom Le Roy Ladurie seems ill-advised to try to assimilate to her mother (you absolutely cannot be a mother and a godmother).

Some kind of equivalence does not seem inconceivable, and some degree of cross-reference or allusion to this or similar folk-tales must be practically certain, but I doubt if many readers will be prepared to attribute to the abbé Fabre the degree of fiendish transformative cunning suggested. The concept of structure seems useful, and by using it Le Roy Ladurie has found something worthwhile to say about the relations between literature and life, the written word and the oral tradition, though in the end his treatment of the first relation seems enigmatic, and that of the second is surely overprecise.

The Englishness of the Gentleman

Trollope's Truths—By JOHN BAYLEY

THIS is a book full of interest and illumination, which goes far beyond Trollope.[1] Like all really good literary criticism it deals with life in general, and like all good social and moral commentary it finds in art its most fruitful sources of speculation. The peculiarly English ideal of the Gentleman has its exemplars in the English novelists, whose "taste for the moral question", as Henry James put it, not only gave them "a more just and liberal" perception of character than the French, but makes them more attentive to the ways in which people go about the ordinary business of life. Gentlemanliness can only be apprehended and analysed on a quotidian basis, and it is this paradox that gives Dr Letwin her point. She makes it brilliantly, and in so doing has written not only the most revealing study yet of Trollope's own world but also of a characteristically English area of the moral sensibility, which some say has vanished.

Bewitched by the art of the French novel, Henry James was at first distinctly grudging about Trollope. Indeed in a review of 1866 he called his novels "essentially and organically stupid." But after long residence in England he ate those words, praising the way in which the "dauntless decency" which Trollope's work exemplified, "the natural decorum of the English spirit", could none the less comprehend the whole of a subject and tell the truth about it in the most penetrating and straightforward way. Trollope was the model of the English novelists who "know their way about the conscience", a word of import which James used in and for both its French and English senses.

Henry James's praise is all the more significant because it came at a time when Trollope's popularity was already on the wane with the novel-reading intelligentsia, partly by reason of his posthumous Autobiography, and when intellectuals of all sorts were turning from English philistinism and "superficiality" to German "profundity." Dr Letwin points out that the German vogue, popularised in their different ways by Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, John Stuart Mill and R. H. Hutton of *The Spectator* (once Trollope's most assiduous reviewer), opened by its "earnestness"—then a wholly desirable virtue—"a window to eternity" which gave visionary comfort to the ever-growing body of thoughtful Victorian agnostics. Even Darwin had disseminated, inadvertently, this new and higher pantheism, which had little time for the institutionalised religion that goes with low common sense. The Metaphysical Society was above such things, and (as Dr Letwin says) "along with other old English verities, Trollope's novels came to be regarded as trivial and tiresome." The new mysticism mistook these verities for mere social chit-chat.

> "A reader who is seeking the one unifying Truth is not likely to care, or even to notice, that when Jane Austen says 'a' Harriet Smith, she is alerting us to Emma's attitude to her friend; nor are they likely to see the difference between the garrulity of Mrs Elton and Miss Bates, or be persuaded that they should. Such details can only seem supremely unimportant to readers who have become drunk on the joys of pantheism. What seems trivial and banal in Jane Austen is certain to become monstrously so in the more elaborately detailed novels of Trollope. While he is painstakingly exploring all the intricacies of moral thought and conduct, the reader who is waiting for eternity to break through is bound to wilt with boredom."

THE ENGLISH HAVE a genius for depreciating what they can do best, and no doubt it is becoming that they should, for periodical fits of self-distrust are necessary to the vitality of any civilisation. But we

[1] *The Gentleman in Trollope: Individuality & Moral Conduct.* By SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN. Macmillan, £15.

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can take it too far, as we do today. Without saying so explicitly, Dr Letwin is seeking to rehabilitate not only Trollope through his presentation of and instinct for the complicated presence or absence of gentlemanliness, but a whole range of attitudes and responses now out of fashion. She does not make the comparison, but the equivalent today of all those 19th-century political-mystical Germans is the normal fare of the first-year undergraduate—Marx to Marcuse, Lacan, Derrida, Lévi-Strauss . . . no old English verities there. And no teacher today suggests that Trollope be studied for the pleasures of his text; like Jane Austen he is a repository not only of boring historical detail but of bourgeois establishment values.

It is the more surprising that Dr Letwin should be the only philosopher and historian of ideologies and ideas to have seen the immense value of Trollope in terms of theoretical discussion about them. Literary critics like A. O. J. Cockshut have made excellent studies of him, but if philosophers read his novels they do not on the whole make use of them, though a good novel is the perfect foil to a lively sense of moral enquiry. The matrix of such an enquiry in the novel is too messy and imprecise for the philosopher, who tends to mistrust moral philosophy in an empirical setting, indeed to distrust it as such, because of the difficulty of getting it out of such a setting. A. J. Ayer is a devotee of Trollope, but I should be surprised to find him investigating a Trollope situation in the course of a philosophical argument. In this matter too we have come to bow down before the continentals. Wittgenstein, around whose personality a whole mystic cult has grown up, gave out that literature began and ended with the simplistic parables of Tolstoy.

In general the philosopher distrusts the novelist because the latter is almost by definition a divided man. If Dr Letwin's thesis has an Achilles heel it is that Trollope is too sensible, too well-balanced, too much of a "gentleman" in fact, to be a really inspired novelist. Balzac and Dickens, like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, have their silly side, but so too in more subtle ways have even George Eliot or Jane Austen or Henry James. Trollope had none of this lurking creative instability, which surfaces to such effect in the sexual romanticism of George Eliot, in the relief which malice affords Jane Austen, in the obsessive curiosities of James. It is part of the achievement of such novelists to reveal themselves inadvertently in their human spontaneity and weakness, which thus become part of the novel's art and permanence. Trollope is not like that. If he identifies with his own "Gentlemen" it is only in the wholly straightforward sense in which a writer is on the side of what he admires. There is nothing devious or guilty or touching about it, as there is for example in the author's identification with his gentleman hero in Ford Madox Ford's Tietjen novels. Indeed Ford is in every way the antithesis, as a novelist, of Trollope, and of the way Trollope goes about his business.

TROLLOPE, THEN, is that rare thing, a wholly unified novelist, and it may be that Dr Letwin's perception of the central importance of the Gentleman in his novels shows, too, their particular limitations. Not a term that implies anything derogatory in his case, for if the uncatalogued instincts and certainties of a gentleman define the nature of Trollope's world, then it would also be true to say that the complex truths about that world could only be demonstrated within the bounds—of secular sanity, practical wisdom, common sense—that determine its fulfilment in art. The paradox of Gentlemanliness which his art so effectively encompasses is that it is at once straightforward in action and ambiguous in conception. The Gentleman manages both to disregard social distinctions and niceties and be exceedingly attentive to them. "How", asks Dr Letwin, "can Trollope be both so indifferent and so attentive to manners? The answer is in his entirely coherent but not at all simple conception of the relation between manners and morals."

In her opening chapter, "The Oddity of a Gentleman",[2] she indicates both the ambiguity and the importance of the concept in ways that are perspicuous and often very funny. The English have always bent over backwards to deny that gentlemanliness has anything to do with class, while at the same time tacitly emphasising the importance of class. As early as the Middle Ages it is asserted that a gentleman, like Piers Plowman, could come from any class. Shakespeare both emphasises social standing and denies its importance, and a fellow-Elizabethan, William Harrison in 1577, also faced both ways: "Gentlemen be those whom their race and bloud, or at least their vertues, do make noble and known." A perfect let-out for "new men", which in the same moment implies that men attain the rank of gentlemen by exercising traditional virtues that may be found in any rank of society. "The gentleman", as Dr Letwin dryly puts it, "manages what may now seem to be a miracle—to treat everyone as an equal without disregarding differences of rank"—a good policy for a novelist incidentally, and one followed by Trollope. On a cynical view a gentleman is simply the best hand at social strategies which get him what he wants, the best gamesmanship player, and this would also be true of the novelist of society. (Without Anthony Powell having to say or even suggest it we know from the

[2] See also, in ENCOUNTER, Shirley Robin Letwin, "The Idea of a Gentleman", November 1981.

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handling of his novel that the deplorable Stringham is a gentleman, whereas Widmerpool and Templer are not. This bears out Steele's pronouncement in *The Tatler* that "the appellation of a Gentleman is never to be affixed to a Man's Circumstances but to his behaviour in them." Stringham retains his style in very difficult circumstances, both in war and peace. At the same time the novelist himself must have, as it were, an undisclosed Widmerpool inside him, driving him on in an ungentlemanly manner. The vulgar will is as necessary to him as is the sense of style.)

Perhaps the term only really defines itself if the author is fully conscious—and wants us to be—of the character's class and background and how he behaves in relation to them. Dr Letwin shrewdly points out that Robinson Crusoe is a gentleman because he behaves as a gentleman should in circumstances of utter solitude: he *makes* his society, in which he comports himself both as top dog and comrade. He retains faith, hope, and charity; he remains himself. Conversely, it seems to me, Conrad's Martin Decoud of *Nostromo*, who kills himself in despair in such circumstances, is not a gentleman for that reason: he fails to reconcile his own sense of himself with his social situation. As Kipling (who has an acute sense of this feat) put it, the gentleman in wholly unfamiliar or outrageous circumstances continues to live "with myself on the terms that I chose." The nub of the matter, in fact, is that the type is the one who best reconciles being himself with being the best kind of social member.

Neither Hamlet nor Falstaff is a gentleman, but then they have no idea of being one. They exist by covering the whole spectrum of human behaviour, and their personalities are not measured against a given social requirement or situation. The criterion is not relevant. Nor would it be in the case of, say, Hardy's characters; Jude the Obscure probably is a gentleman in some sense, but he has no opportunity to be conscious of the fact, nor we to appreciate it: his being is determined by factors outside his own control, which is to a large extent the point of the fiction about him. In a similar way the status of a gentleman must not be too obviously predetermined by the author. The point of Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust* is very obviously that he is a doomed gentleman in an age which has ceased to recognise the status except by exploiting its weakness. The book's pattern is bound to focus the reader's attention on Waugh himself, and on his obsessive interest in upper-class behaviour. Except in *The Way We Live Now* Trollope never draws attention to the social point he is making, just as he leaves to the reader to decide who are the gentlemen in his books and who are not. The point of the category, and why it is so important in Trollope's case, is precisely because he does not draw attention to it himself, or allow those who belong to it to do so in his novels.

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CAN A LADY BE a gentleman? Yes, indeed she can. Dr Letwin is absolutely right to claim that "the most perfect gentleman in Trollope is Madame Max Goesler", who is the daughter of a humble German-Jewish attorney, a widow who has made a fortune by marriage. It is a particularly telling instance, because though Madame Goesler is as much on the make as Proust's Madame Verdurin (definitely not a gentleman) "she was not just out to win, but to win by playing well and fairly." She eventually refuses the Duke of Omnium because although a coronet, and the premier one in England, is a very tempting prize, she could no longer have felt quite herself in that position. "As Madame Goesler I can live, even among my superiors, at my ease", she wrote to the Duke. "As your Grace's wife I should be easy no longer." Trollope succeeds perfectly in showing not only why she refused him but why the Duke made the offer, and in so doing shows how psychological truth in his novels wins out over the requirements of plot. Because we believe in the truth of Marie Goesler's decision we believe in her, and in what Dr Letwin calls the "unknown morality" which determines her conduct.

And which is so notably absent in her antithesis, Lizzie Eustace of *The Eustace Diamonds*. Lizzie tells lies of every kind not because they help or advantage her—they do the opposite—but because they provide the perils of vicissitude and drama which help to give her some kind of consciousness. Her absence of worldly motive, the kind of motive which Trollope's characters understand, makes her behaviour incomprehensible to them. "Uncommonly clever", says the baffled Lord George when her deception comes out, "but I don't see the use of it." Of course in Trollopian society this has its fascinating side. Lady Glencora says: "I call that woman a perfect Godsend—what should we have done without her?" She is a Madame Bovary done in comic style, in a typically empirical and English way, and the reader who supposes her to be a sort of Becky Sharp of the upper crust misses out on Trollope's peculiar perceptiveness about her. She falls in love with the unscrupulous Mr Emilius just because she knows there is not a word of truth in anything he says, and this lends him "a dash of poetry." They are two of a kind, whereas Lord George, much as he wanted her fortune, "did not dare to share even his boat with so dangerous a fellow-passenger." Madame Bovary is finally ruined by her folly about money, but it is a very English touch that makes money for Lizzie the one reality that will keep her "sane and safe." Much as she admires and responds to Mr Emilius's romantic talent for deception she takes good care not to let him get hold of her cash. She is an incorrigibly comic character, and who but Trollope would be able to show with such unobtrusive art that in a real social setting a comic character can behave as lethally, and cause as much real damage, as a wicked or desperate one?

Lizzie's real trouble, and what makes her (as Dr Letwin says) "the perfect antipode of a gentleman", is that she has no true self of her own, and hence cannot recognise the proper way of being oneself in society. This point is again fundamental, not only for the "unknown morality" of being a gentleman, but for our understanding of the ways in which changing patterns of social morality are reflected in the literary presentation of the self. In the 20th-century novel the self has often been defined precisely by the gratuitousness of its social behaviour: André Gide might well find Lizzie a model of the "authentic" individual. But, as Dr Letwin remarks, "to a gentleman, her inability to respect any limits or order makes her as nearly devoid of individuality as any sane person can be, and as tiresome as she is dangerous."

A SOCIETY WHICH RESPECTS gentlemen takes a particular pleasure in their individuality, because it singularises and humanises the collective social morality. By his invisible bond with society the gentleman discovers the freedom of being himself, and this is the opposite of social "conformity." Since he is conscious of the existence of a number of classes, and himself belongs to one of them, he exhibits no distinctive social or ideological character; he is not a party member; there is no "cadre" of gentlemen, as of "*Normaliens*", nor even a club of them. This gives the clue to the eclipse of the concept, if not of the thing itself. Our contemporary view of class is more like a Continental one, seen in terms of ideologies, though also of cherished modes of behaviour; and this attitude particularly resents the idea of social mobility. A class-ridden society is more socially mobile than one which in professing egalitarianism actually nurtures self-perpetuating groups and élites. An involuntarily mobile society is preoccupied with "gentlemanliness" because this is at once an ideal to aspire to and a mode of behaviour of which everyone is capable. Neither pleases the modern egalitarian, clinging to an ideology of "Us" and "Them", and suppressing any mention of common ideals. In spite or perhaps because of its disapproval of "divisive" factors in society, the modern spirit does not in practice take kindly to a concept which both recognises and overrides them.

The fact that for Trollope a gentleman could be a lady would not please women's lib. A Lady is of course not the same thing as a Gentleman, which reveals the historic weakness and imbalance in both concepts, their tendency to sentimentalise an idea as if it were a fact. A gentleman can be himself, but a lady has to be a "lady." Gentlemen have it both ways, whereas a lady is typecast, fixed by society in her stereotype. No wonder women's lib gives a bit-

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ter smile. Yet stereotypes are always with us, as the liberated woman of today involuntarily reveals, and the idea of the lady and the gentleman probably represented a greater departure from stereotypes than emancipated persons today like to think. Certainly the decay of the individual in modern fiction, the eclipse of any pleasure in "character" as such, is connected with the disappearance of interest in Trollopian gentlemanliness, and the tendency to present individuals as either totally alienated or else locked into cliques and communities.

THE FICTIONAL TREATMENT of ladies is significant here. Lily Dale is certainly one (and no doubt a "gentleman" too) but this has only an indirect bearing on her refusal to accept Johnny Eames after she has been jilted by Adolphus Crosbie. She does not owe it to herself to remain unwedded after her heart has been broken—an attitude for which Trollope would have felt no approbation at all—but she simply prefers it that way. Compare with Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, in which—as the title itself suggests—the concept has equivocated into a rigidity which James exploits and perhaps admires. Because Isobel Archer is an American she is a free spirit, and she is further liberated by Ralph Touchett's legacy. But when out of an idea of what she owes to herself, she makes a disastrous marriage, she also owes it to herself—as a lady—to remain proudly in those bonds. James shows us with wonderful subtlety what happens when a concept like "being a lady" becomes as it were "personalised" in a new culture. Trollope would have felt nothing but scorn for a lady or gentleman who allowed the concept to determine their private lives, inclinations, and passions, except in so far as these should be adjusted to what produces a rational social happiness. Emily Wharton, in *The Prime Minister*, has made a great mistake in marrying Lopez, but after his death she gets no credit from Trollope for refusing to marry her former suitor, because she felt that to do so would be an admission that she had been wrong. It is significant, too, that her father is taken in by the villainous Lopez because instead of trusting his instinct he makes himself feel too consciously that a gentleman must be fair to a foreigner. Just as he would never have written a book with a title like *John Halifax, Gentleman*, Trollope implies that a true gentleman is never too conscious of the fact and of what it requires of him. Ladies and gentlemen act so, and are so, by instinct.

In *The Portrait of A Lady* Henry James tries but fails to suggest sexual feeling, the sort that Isobel overcomes in her final renunciation of Goodwood. Trollope has no trouble with this at all. Lily Dale feels that to kiss Crosbie and be caressed by him is the summit of existence, what she was made for.

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He is as robustly accurate about sexual passion, particularly where women are concerned, as he is about male ambition, the uses of religion, and the fair and unfair methods of making one's way in the world. On all these topics Dr Letwin has points to make of absorbing interest. There are moments, too, when she skilfully suggests Trollope's central weakness as well as his overall strength, and this is of particular significance in relation to the received notion of Trollope as a sturdy chronicler of unremarkable lives, keeping things going from day to day as if he were working on the Archers. In fact he plans his characters, as do George Eliot and Henry James, on the basis of an "idea", which he then works out as intelligently and comprehensively as they do. "A gentleman's integrity gives him a kind of fixity", writes Dr Letwin. "And this makes him resemble a work of art." That is the revealing sentence. Trollope as a technician is interested in gentlemen because they offer a stable field for the workings of his art. He knows where he is with them. He can live with them (as he remarked of his characters in his Autobiography) "in the full reality of established intimacy." Intimacy, yes, but reality with Trollope, as with more obviously recondite artists, is an ambiguous matter. The figure of the Gentleman provides a perfect artistic convention: he lives in art, while seeming to deal only with life. The point is tautologous, but it is worth making because Trollope has been so often patronised for his literalness, the accumulative contingency of his world, which can appear wearisome if we don't appreciate that it has as much planned artifice as Proust's.

It is because of their fixity as works of art that gentlemen can be manipulated, above all by the artist himself. Trollope shares the potential weakness of those other masters of the manipulated situation, Henry James and George Eliot, the risk of the reader saying to himself: "Fascinating, but I don't believe a word of it." The suspension of that sort of disbelief is fundamental to the art of the social novel, which is probably why the genre itself has come down in the world. To students reared on structuralism disbelief is irrelevant, and the common reader is no longer conditioned to suspend it. C. P. Snow, a disciple and devotee of Trollope (and author of a by no means bad book about him), made the profound error in his own fiction of wholly artificialising and stylising the kind of power struggle that is always kept latent in Trollope, concealed by humour and by the realities of individual behaviour and daily living. While Trollope, like all great artists, manages to have things both ways, combining the machinations of art with the illusions of naturalism, Snow can only pursue his abstract dream down the corridors of power.

Mr Wortle's School, the most Jamesian of Trollope's shorter fictions, is a good instance of how he can manipulate an hypothesis as art and at the same time remain on the level of common sense and daily experience. Mr Wortle runs a prep-school, aided by Mr Peacocke, a jewel of an assistant, and his wife who acts as matron. But it comes out that the Peacockes are not married at all, though their relation has nothing deliberately immoral about it. What is Dr Wortle to do? He is a gentleman; so is Mr Peacocke, so is his wife. So their solution attains the status of a work of art that is natural to gentlemen. If they had not been gentlemen the Peacockes might have preened themselves on their lack of conventionality, and Dr Wortle congratulated himself on his broadmindedness. As it is they recognise both the truth of their own instincts and what they none the less properly owe to social convention. In a somewhat similar way the most gentlemanly politicians in Trollope combine scrupulousness with a lack of earnestness: they recognise both "the gravity and triviality" of everything they do.

IT REMAINS TO SAY, and I do not think that Dr Letwin would disagree, that though Trollope occupies a unique place in the pantheon of the English moral novelists—somewhere to the right of Fielding and to the left of Jane Austen and George Eliot—he lacks, as they do not, a sense of underworld, of impulses, anarchies, and enjoyments moving beneath the surface. A gentleman possesses his consciousness in private. He does not advertise

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the fact, and a novelist writing about gentlemen does not let us in on it, nor—even inadvertently—on his own private life, if he has any. The objection to Trollope is not to his trivial or pedestrian world but to its lack of intimacy, which in some readers can not unreasonably induce boredom.

During his army life Anthony Powell's narrator Nick Jenkins is, on one occasion, confronted by a general with a slim volume in his hand, asking what he thinks of Trollope. All the junior officer can find to say is: "Never found him easy to read, sir."

The general slowly repeats his words in accents of amazement and incomprehension, and then demands what the young whippersnapper reads instead. After a pause of total blankness, "Well, there's Balzac, sir."

This provokes a further explosion. In fact the general is a man of deep humanity and penetrating observation, and one of the pleasures of the delightful scene is the gulf it reveals between the gentleman and—for want of a better word—the modernist. Flustered as he is, the narrator manages to get in one telling comment on Trollope, that "he does more thinking than feeling." On that note, and with recognition of the indubitable difference between Trollope and Balzac, the bounds of profitable discussion have been defined and must be abandoned.

Respectable Formalities

New Poetry—By JOHN MOLE

GIVEN ITS PUBLISHERS, who hail it on the cover as a brilliant new landmark, *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*[1] must be considered as an event. Given the machinery of publishing, the commercial imperative and the demands of marketing, it must also be promoted as a *significant* event. In the publicity hand-out which accompanies my review copy, the word *major* is substituted for *brilliant*—"a major new landmark in anthologies of modern poetry."

So the pressure is on. Another anthology destined to be tossed to-and-fro between the cachet of its imprint, the claims of its editors, the society of its chosen few, and the talents of its individual poets—if the trees can be singled out from the wood. The more brilliant/major a publishing event, the more it merely serves the moment it seeks either to define or transcend. It is a collusion of innocent and knowing opportunism; a book with serious intentions which flies in, bags its place on the conveyor-belt of contemporary culture and hopes to make a bit of fuss at the customs while getting through.

In this particular case, it was a good idea to have a pair of editors, two heads being safer (if not more imaginative) than one, and more likely to vanish conveniently into the eventful mirror. The idiosyncratic, passionate partisan is always a risk. He is likely to turn up too early for the event, or behave inappropriately at it. With luck, he'll be an immediate success, but by and large perhaps it's better to be careful. Certainly no single editor—least of all the already legendary Alvarez—could ever have written, "This is an anthology of what, over the last few years, a number of close observers have come to think of as the new British poetry." With what subtle modesty Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion smuggle through their unexceptional taste as party members of an élite committee of propagation. The whole tone of their introduction guarantees an authentic, insidiously safe anthology *à la mode*—a neat package of what can comfortably and comfortingly be felt to be important. It's not all that bad, but it *is* dispiritingly faceless—or rather, where a vivid face would have been welcome it wears the detached look of wisdom after the event. In places the modesty is tentative to the point of paralysis: ". . . it is now twenty years since the last serious anthology of British poetry was published . . . an unusually long gap, and to fill it with a representative anthology must in itself be some kind of service. We believe that we may be able to do rather more than that. . . ." *Some kind of, may be able to, rather more than.* . . . Oh come on out and declare yourselves! (And, incidentally, what was so *un*serious about Edward Lucie-Smith's *British Poetry since 1945*, published by Penguin in 1970?) But maybe this is the limit of Morrison and Motion's capacity for declaration, once agreement has been reached. According to Morrison, quoted in the hand-out, things were not always so bland:

> "Andrew Motion and I considered some fifty poets or so for inclusion but narrowed the choice to twenty: to do this we met, corresponded, exchanged phone calls, argued, compromised,

[1] *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*. Edited by BLAKE MORRISON and ANDREW MOTION. Penguin, £1.95.

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agreed, changed our minds again, and finally reached our decisions—remaining, as we began, good friends. There were differences but our tastes coincided to a remarkable degree."

There is more vigour and sense of engagement in this short statement than in the whole of the judicious introduction (or rationale) as finally published. With the bald announcement "this anthology is intended to be didactic as well as representative" the editors come back from vacation. There is a shift from what seems to have been a home kitchen to an institutional dining hall, and the excitement of planning a menu and concocting a meal gives way to the respectable formalities of eating in college under the shadow of the high table "where tastes coincide to a remarkable degree."

But what *proof* is in the eating? The poets are mostly under forty-five, with the exception of Anne Stevenson, Fleur Adcock, and Peter Scupham who was born in 1933 but did not publish his first book until 1972. And no one who appeared in Alvarez's *The New Poetry*—however young he was at the time (e.g. John Fuller)—has been considered eligible for inclusion. Whereas, according to the editors, Alvarez "presented language as a mere instrument in a therapeutic transaction between writer and reader", the twenty poets they have assembled (as against Alvarez's slightly more generous twenty-eight) are set out to demonstrate a new relish for language. They are led by Seamus Heaney—"the most important new poet of the last fifteen years"—for whom language "embodies politics, history and locality, as well as having its own delectability." Forces of disintegration, particularly the Irish Troubles, are seen as being approached obliquely, rather than through naked confrontation, in poems which have been made "to accommodate an uncommonly wide range of social responsiveness" through fictions, narratives, myth, emblematic landscapes, and analogues drawn from other troubled societies in which the artist finds himself an "inner *émigré*." A sense of exile, where the poet—in Heaney's words—sits "weighing and weighing/My responsible *tristia*"—predominates among several of the most serious and competent poets in the anthology, and (en masse) lies heavily despite the felicities of their surfaces. This is, perhaps, inevitable—although a poet such as James Simmons would have offered some variety without trivialising the theme—and the editors choose reliably from Heaney, Michael Longley, Derek Mahon and Tom Paulin, establishing in each case a strong, individual voice. Their selection from Paul Muldoon is distorted by their over-valuation of his clever extravaganza "Immram."

TONY HARRISON AND DOUGLAS DUNN deserve their places—two poets whose uneasy relationship both with their provincial, working-class upbringing and with "the cultural establishment" has been the source of much energetic and moving work. Harrison makes the stronger impact, while Dunn is given more space. Other good poets include James Fenton, Peter Scupham (made to look much more of a miniaturist than he is), Fleur Adcock and Anne Stevenson. These are various talents, presented even-handedly, and in most instances they endorse an apparent preference for intelligent, humane, well-crafted verse. There is nothing fugitive. Almost without exception they come from a well-established and narrow range of publishers who have nursed their reputations, but they do leave one wondering why the many excellent small presses must be seen as having contributed apparently so little of significance to "contemporary poetry."

Which brings me to what disappoints and worries me most about the anthology. Praising Heaney in his recent notebook, *The Private Art*, Geoffrey Grigson wrote:

> "Sometimes a single image out of a poem goes up into the dark and hangs there by itself, and says 'Watch! Watch for more!' and we know of a new poet. For me that was so with the last stanza in Seamus Heaney's 'Sunlight'
>
> *And here is love*
> *like a tinsmith's scoop*
> *sunk past its gleam*
> *in the meal bin.*
>
> 'Watch' says the image, in its sudden possession of the dark, 'Watch', it says, 'but you may be disappointed.' "

This is certainly a fine image, arising as it does out of a depth of feeling, an exact, sensuous register of personal emotion; but in so much contemporary verse, as approved by Morrison and Motion, there are just too many smart images going up in the dark and hanging there, rootless. Introducing the so-called "Martian school", brilliantly beamed up by Craig Raine and Christopher Reid, the editors note that these writers share a delight in outrageous simile and like to "twist and mix" language—verbs suggestive of poker and cocktails respectively, and, in their innocence, witnessing to the superficiality which is rather anxiously denied in stressing that the Martians' ingenuity does not prevent them from expressing emotion. But, yes, they do play a game for quick returns, and they are intoxicating, and their influence and reputation continue to grow. They have taken the element of visual epiphany which is a vivid strength in Heaney, isolated it, mixed in the cunning of the riddler, and made it a device—monotonous in its little frissons of amazing freshness. They, and to a less spectacular extent other more anecdotal poets in this anthology, will sacrifice far too much to a verbal coup. That they

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should be given so much space in such a selective book is depressing. It's a selling short of the full resources of poetry, highlighting a fashion certainly, but giving far too much credence to a very partial story which should look infinitely more redundant in twenty years time than anything to be found in Alvarez. But, then, is that *should* mere wishful thinking? Maybe *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Poetry*, in its confident representation and didacticism, will contribute to an increasing detachment of the elements of poetry from poetry itself. I can only hope not.

DEREK MAHON'S NEW COLLECTION [2] contains several poems good enough to place alongside his "A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford", a justly celebrated piece, and one of the best in the Penguin Book. It is not only in his confident use of the familiar stanza form that Mahon can be seen as the Marvell amongst his contemporaries and compatriots. He is a truly witty writer, and his recent work reminds me of T. S. Eliot's observation that all too often one is confronted by "serious poets who seem afraid of acquiring wit lest they lose intensity." That this is a genuine risk is illustrated by numerous, honourable present-day poets, but in Mahon's case what Eliot calls "wit's internal equilibrium" is immediately evident. Whereas there has always been a tough reasonableness behind his sometimes very slight lyric grace, there are all the signs that the lyric grace in itself is becoming tougher:

> *I lived there as a boy and know the coal*
> *Glittering in its shed, late-afternoon*
> *Lambency informing the deal table,*
> *The ceiling cradled in a radiant spoon.*

That *informing*, in the third line, is characteristic of Mahon's imagination and skill; it's a modest word but brilliantly exact, a perfect functional pairing with the more obviously "poetic" *lambency*. In a poem which, like so many in the book, holds darkness and light in an intense equilibrium, it presents light as a virtue, as an element of the imagination possessing the material world and shaping it from within. Mahon's poems are full of radiant objects which shine all the brighter for their setting in a dark, chilly universe of exile and unrest, and a hard, crystalline energy informs the measured verse.

Mahon can, at times, appear a solemnly playful, self-aware doomsday dandy, and in "Another Sunday Morning" he simultaneously assumes and is amused by the stance. The echoes of Robert Lowell are unmistakable and, given the title, clearly deliberate, but the sardonic viewpoint is more reminis-

[2] *The Hunt by Night*. By DEREK MAHON. Oxford University Press, £4.00.

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cent of Louis MacNeice in Regents Park than Lowell in Central. Mahon's temperament sets a limit to his sense of public responsibility:

A chiliastic prig, I prowl
Among the dog-lovers and growl;
Among the kite-fliers and fly
The private kite of poetry—

There are echoes of Dark Tower Yeats, too, particularly in the fifth stanza of "To the Unborn", and assuming the persona of Knut Hamsun in Old Age, Mahon confronts one of Yeats's most celebrated lines:

One fortunate in both would have us choose
"Perfection of the life or of the work."
Nonsense, you work best on a full stomach
As everybody over thirty knows—
For who, unbreakfasted, will love the lark?
Prepare your protein-fed epiphanies,
Your heavenly mansions blazing in the dark.

This is well-put and crucial, but Mahon's own epiphanies are protein-fed and he knows, with an exquisite guilt, that he's well-breakfasted. He's not going to deny his gift for the sake of an obligatory solemnity. The dark remains a *backdrop* to offset the vivid inventions of his verse, and when in the volume's title poem he posits for a moment that Uccello's marvellous rampant pageantry "were not the great/Adventure we suppose but some elaborate/Spectacle put on for fun/And not for food" he catches exactly the tension set up throughout his work. His own hunt by night has a private beast in view—the anxious source of his vivid and generous imagination.

IN SOME WAYS similar to Derek Mahon's, though lacking his kind of formal elegance—and, I suspect, mistrusting it—Anne Stevenson's recent poems are at the same time anxious and generous, brittle yet open to a wide range of experience which sometimes overwhelms them. *Minute by Glass Minute* [3] is puritan and celebrant, and the glass that Anne Stevenson keeps looking through (the title of this new book is reminiscent of the earlier *Travelling Behind Glass*) both separates her from the world and irradiates it. "When we belong to the world/we become what we are", she asserts at the end of "Poem to my Daughter", but she knows that consciousness, the self-awareness of her art, is a holding back:

Another day in March. Late
rawness and wetness. I hear my mind say,
if only I could paint essences . . . .

She keeps hearing what her mind says, and she answers back with litanies of the actual. Several poems in the book weave their way philosophically in and out of exact, sensuous transcriptions such as:

Beechbole, cheekbone of the interior,
Sugaring maple, tap of sour soil,
Woody sweetness, wine of the honeybark,
Mountain trickle, bitter to the tongue.

but there is a strenuous, mannered air about the way Anne Stevenson registers her doubts and tentative certainties. "Burnished" is an interesting poem in this respect. It begins:

Walking out of Hay in the rain, imagining
Blake
imagining the real world into existence,
I suddenly turned on him and said with
energy—
How dare you inflict imagination on us!
What halo does the world deserve? And he—
Let worlds die burnished, as along this bank.

"What halo does the world deserve?" The question is rhetorical and has a double edge; it is recriminating and, at the same time, hesitantly affirmative. At its centre is the quarrel out of which Anne Stevenson makes an authentic, if somewhat befuddled poetry. The tug between what, in the long poem "Green Mountain, Black Mountain", she defines as "ghost-pull" and "animal pull" leaves rather too much unresolved although it's fascinating as oblique autobiography and as an exploration of the contrasts between her New England upbringing and her more recent experience.

An incidental strength in Anne Stevenson's work is her acute feeling for moments of pain in human relationships—there's a world of horror and compassion in the portrait of her dying mother ("she was dying at us")—but in the same poem she can be modishly whimsical in her excessive use of simile. Stanzas 11-13 of section five of "Green Mountain, Black Mountain" announce the Martian invasion of Vermont.

FOR DR ANIMUS, in Anne Stevenson's "Small Philosophical Poem", "the world is the pleasure of thought." It's a pleasure intensified by the "small glass of doubt" which his wife Anima pours him. Alistair Elliot is a poet who belongs in such stringently meditative company where thoughts, as he says, are often "like shop-windows standing between/us and our ease" but keep on coming and are shaped with relish into poems. In fact the poems themselves become a kind of ease, in that Elliot is an immensely *urbane* poet who has given back strength to that somewhat bland term. His work is full of scholarship, wit and observation, and it's appropriate that one of the poems should take as its epigraph Dr Johnson's comment "He that travels in

[3] *Minute by Glass Minute*. By ANNE STEVENSON. Oxford University Press, £4.50.

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the Highlands may easily saturate his soul with intelligence, if he will acquiesce in the first account." Elliot's poems are certainly saturated with intelligence, but never enclosed. They are open to everyday experience, and some of the most moving of them in *Talking Back* [4] result from a learned acquiescence to the commonplace. For example, the "kitchen full of folk" to which he delivers a message in "Ingredients of a Sleepless Night in Wales" is illuminated by the passing reference to *Piers Plowman*, fitted quite naturally into a conversational idiom. There's nothing precious about this—Elliot's poetic personality is far too gregarious ever to lay itself open to the charge of rarified erudition—but the approach it demonstrates is what makes poems which, on the surface, are about ancestors, families, travel and passing events, work effectively at a far deeper level.

Alistair Elliot's skill is equally evident in his dexterous, juicy versions of Verlaine's *Femmes/Hombres*.[5] When asked what brush he painted his women with, Renoir is said to have replied "*avec mon chibre.*" In this collaboration *chibre* has spoken to *chibre* across the years, and is obviously the only tool fit for the job:

> *You are not the most fond of love*
> *Of women who have tried me on;*
> *You are not the most spicy of*
> *My women of the year just gone,*
>
> *But I adore you anyway!*
> *Besides, your sweet, mild body in*
> *Its final calm knows how to say*
> *All that is fatly feminine . . . .*

Fatly feminine and rampantly male, *Femmes/Hombres* is a catalogue of mutual delights without what Burns (and Elliot) calls the "consequential sorrows."

AND THIS SEEMS a suitable point of intermission at which to mention Gavin Ewart's entertaining new collection of short poems, *More Little Ones*. [6] There are limericks, clerihews, haiku, one-liners, all competing for the prize for the most memorable brevity. Some of the best are not that far distant from Verlaine ("Pantoum: Worship", for example) while others, such as the couplet on Seamus Heaney—"He's very popular among his mates./ I think I'm Auden. He thinks he's Yeats"—are perhaps too complex in their multiple ironies to appeal widely outside the literary metropolis.

In a poetic climate which favours irony and cunning, and in which *content* is often the merely necessary means towards the desired end of stylistic novelty, Patric Dickinson's candid lyricism is as refreshing as it is rare. The poems in *A Rift in Time* [7] are, to take Hardy's definition of poetry, "emotion put into measure", and their authenticity transcends fashion. The language is unspectacular, the verse forms traditional, but they serve the purpose of a poet whose depth of feeling is best conveyed by the simplest means. I find Dickinson's work often very moving indeed; it is immediate, and subtle in its modesty—though the *personality* is too awkward, even irascible in its loves and hates, ever to be described as self-effacing. Dickinson's kind of straightforwardness is a balance of the commonplace and the idiosyncratic. Here is the second of two poems entitled "Seathwaite Falls":

> *Walking up the tortuous path*
> *Up through the rocks and bracken*
> *Towards the falls,*
> *I felt so heavenly shed*
>
> *Of being, yet nothing gone,*
> *An angel's nakedness,*
> *I stopped and you climbed nearer.*
> *I was so little dead*

[4] *Talking Back*. By ALISTAIR ELLIOT. Secker & Warburg, £4.95.

[5] *Femmes/Hombres*. By PAUL VERLAINE. Translated by ALISTAIR ELLIOT. Anvil Press, £3.95.

[6] *More Little Ones*. By GAVIN EWART. Anvil Press, £3.50.

[7] *A Rift in Time*. By PATRIC DICKINSON. Chatto & Windus, £3.95.

JAMES BALDWIN

JIMMY'S BLUES

Selected Poems

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So not alone with love,
You had to be silent there
By the never-silent waters
And nothing heard, if spoken.

—Your kind of coming back
Our ever-flowing on.

This strikes me as an exemplary lyric. I have read it aloud several times, appreciating its pauses, repetitions and emphases—the discreet impetus of that second "up" at the beginning of the second line, the exact placing of "heavenly" which anticipates "an angel's nakedness" but might at first be mistaken for mere effusion, the "nothing heard" in verse three which echoes and complements the "nothing gone" in verse two, and the absolute clarity with which a complex perception is expressed in the last two lines. By no means all of *A Rift in Time* is as impressive as this, but even a handful of poems of such quality makes it a book for which to be grateful.

I ADMIRED Gillian Clarke's previous collection, *The Sundial*, but found rather too many of her vivid, sensuous nature poems marred by neat, moralistic codas. *Letter from a Far Country* [8] trusts more in the power of metaphor to teach through revelation, and is a various, impressive book. The title poem, written for radio, explores the role of the home-centred wife and mother "who ought to be/ up to her wrists in marriage" in the context of place and history, those "dead grandmothers" who

. . . haul at the taut silk cords;
set us fetching eggs, feeding hens,
mixing rage with the family bread,
lock us to the elbows in soap suds.
Their sculleries and kitchens fill
with steam, sweetness, goosefeathers.

From wrists to elbows, as the sense of history and restless disquiet intensifies throughout a poem which is—paradoxically—also a celebration. Gillian Clarke is best, though, as in her earlier work, at making her reader aware of what she calls "the otherness of pain." That is the farthest country of all. It crowds her poems with intimations, and she looks resolutely in its direction.

MICHAEL CULLUP, whose first book *Reading Geographies* [9] brings together the work of sixteen years, is another poet who doesn't scorn subject matter and is attentive to the particular moment. He is quoted by his publisher as believing " . . . as Edward Thomas put it when writing of Robert Frost, in words being *bound together and made elements of beauty by a calm eagerness of emotion.*" Unfortunately, although the poems are well-crafted, there is a tendency for the calm to become blandness, and Cullup takes rather too many short cuts in his attempts to establish mood:

There are leaves in my mind, dying leaves.
It must be autumn, judging by the weather.
Something is smouldering somewhere.
The boughs creak.

There's a kind of precision about this, but it begins to seem like the after-effects of feeling—too measured a transcription—rather than a re-creation. "Something is smouldering somewhere" may be genuinely perceptive but it is also curiously null. The best poems in *Reading Geographies* are about people, and the best of all is "The Ailing Gentlewoman", in which a clever use of banal parentheses catches the mood of twilight gentility:

The world too being delicate as the snow was,
So that the nature of one's disorder
Fell so much without complaint to the
ground
One felt healed, in a manner of speaking,
The ground being covered by snow
As it were by a mantle, over all,
So that one looked from one's world out on
to it
Lying there,
With a sense of rightness at its being so
Just as it was, fallen,
One was grateful, in a way, for its being like
that:
Without hurt, white, and quite silent.

JOHN COTTON'S ADMIRABLE Priapus Press has just celebrated its twentieth year in backroom business, and I'd urge anyone who feels that volumes like *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Poetry* are less than sufficient to send for its complete list. To do so at once, in fact, since today's decision so often becomes tomorrow's good intention. Among the press's recent publications three particularly successful items stand out: John Loveday's vivid rural vignettes from the 1930s and '40s, *The Agricultural Engineer*,[10] John Cotton's own *Day Book*,[11] which is a series of thirty-two "fragments" moving adroitly in and around themes of personal and social concern, and Emma Rose's *Being Glass*.[12] Emma Rose is a young poet of real promise. Although her imagery is often too tightly packed,

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[8] *Letter from a Far Country*. By GILLIAN CLARKE. Carcanet, £3.25.
[9] *Reading Geographies*. By MICHAEL CULLUP. Carcanet, £3.25.
[10] *The Agricultural Engineer*. By JOHN LOVEDAY. Priapus Press (37 Lombardy Drive, Berkhamsted, Herts.), 50p.
[11] *Day Book*. By JOHN COTTON. Priapus Press, £2.00.
[12] *Being Glass*. By EMMA ROSE. Priapus Press, 50p.

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and her intensity self-enclosed and brittle—"Always inside I am looking out"—she has an excellent ear and a gift for touching in the minutest detail. Her imagination leans towards the surreal, and she needs to beware of whimsy, but her sense of a poem's necessary shape restrains her from excess. More of her work can be found in *Flags for the Occasion*,[13] a beautifully produced pamphlet from the Dodman Press which also publishes the excellent poetry magazine *Grand Piano*, and this is a characteristic example: "Ceremonial":

Glass and dust make a fine cutting edge,
but glass for all its brilliance is not
what they have come for, nor for dust,
although
they hope to gain something from this.

The candle and the solemn dog.
A ring is poised between her thumb and
finger,
around it promises and rituals
whose light strikes glass in patterns of frail
gold.

[13] *Flags for the Occasion*. By EMMA ROSE. The Dodman Press (24 West Hill, Hitchin, Herts.), £1.25.

Sinners

There is a kind of mumbling song
Concentrated, taken up.
I stare at the bandaged heads that turn
To the wayside gathering. Are they
Thinking of the spectacle they make?

Under the hurt brows
The eyes live.
I see my image in their lakes
Calming waves, the sun behind me.
The young man who was dead
Sits up. Silence,
Then a kind of rumbling sound
And heads turn up as though
To hear a voice.
On the poor hillside
The houses sit
Ready for earthquake. The young man
stands.

The storm is gesturing far off
And shouting. Its anger travels in.
I move to the group unwrapping my
Deformity, sensing their greed
For wholesomeness, the frantic praying.

I look at the tired man
Curing and raising.
In his black eyes new images:
The garments and hats of Pharisees
Talking together,
Stepping distastefully this way
Past the poor houses and cripples.
They come to spurn
Our hopes with the No of orthodoxy.
They find devils and magic
At this harmless wayside,
And say our sickness makes us sinners.

Patrick Hare

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Is "Arms Control" an Unrealistic Fiction?

A Conversation: EUGENE V. ROSTOW & GEORGE URBAN

URBAN: *Reflecting on that intricate web of negotiations which several US teams are now conducting with the Soviet Union, the layman may well wonder: Are we being governed in our assessments of Soviet power by Soviet capabilities or Soviet intentions? And if it is, as it is likely to be, both—what is the balance between them? I ask this question because both the "what-***can***-they-do?" and "what-do-they-***intend***-to-do?" schools of thinking have distinguished advocates in the Western nuclear analysis and policy-making community. The first comes mainly from those who look upon the Soviet Union as an ordinary power on the march, while the second tends to think of Soviet power as the self-proclaimed "fist of the international working class", fulfilling or preparing to fulfil its millennial mission.*

ROSTOW: The two perceptions—*capabilities* and *intentions*—cannot be divorced from one another. Both are extremely important; and governments, if they are wise, take both into account. At the same time, Western governments find it hard to believe, just as Western people often find it hard to believe, that the Soviet Union *is* what it *is*: a régime which has been engaged in a process of indefinite expansion for a long time.

The Mexicans and Canadians have long common borders with the United States which has an enormous capability to attack, invade, and subjugate. Yet it never crosses Mexican or Canadian minds that the Americans might do so. Why? Because the US is not a warlike society and has no missionary doctrine to follow. There is in the US no political force that could give rise to Mexican or Canadian anxieties. Yet all the states near the Soviet Union, and many that are distant from it, suffer from anxiety about Soviet aggression, infiltration, or subversion. Think of Poland, of Afghanistan, and of Cambodia, to restrict myself to recent examples.

The heart of the problem is that the Soviet Union has never accepted Article *2* (*4*) of the Charter of the UN as applicable to it. From the beginning of the Charter-era the Soviet Union has claimed for itself, and only for itself, the privilege of using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states which are not governed by "socialist" régimes, or indeed of using force against "socialist" states if they are under the control of "socialist" heretics, revisionists, or schismatics, or if they show dangerous signs of backsliding to bourgeois democracy. In other words, the

EUGENE V. ROSTOW *was until recently the director of President Reagan's arms control and disarmament agency, and would have been the US representative in the renewed strategic arms negotiations with the Russians in Geneva. This interview was completed shortly before his dramatic (and not yet fully explained) resignation.*

Professor Rostow was for many years Dean of the Law School at Yale University, and as a Democrat served in the administrations of three Presidents (Roosevelt, Truman, Johnson).

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heart of the problem is: capabilities and intentions merging in Soviet aggression.

You are, of course, quite right in saying that some people—especially our military—worry about Soviet *capabilities* exclusively. But capabilities alone, if they were purely defensive, if they were not coupled with a government policy which is overtly expansionist, would constitute no problem. But no one can say that the military posture of the Soviet Union is purely defensive. While we in the West have been primarily concerned with deterring both conventional and nuclear attacks, Soviet military doctrine and force dispositions emphasise the will and the ability to fight and win a conventional or nuclear war.

—As "The Economist" recently pointed out, Soviet books about war and the way the Russians conduct their manoeuvres make it clear that the Red Army is organised and trained exclusively for offensive warfare. Retreat, even a temporary period of defence, has no place in the thinking of the Soviet military planners.

ROSTOW: Of course, the Soviet government would prefer to have the fruits of military victory without having to wage war. To achieve that end, it believes, the nuclear superiority it is trying so hard to attain would be a political force of overpowering influence—the ultimate instrument of coercion and intimidation.

DOES THE SOVIET UNION'S *late imperialism stem from some tacit conviction that Russia's hour as a nation has finally struck in the rotation of leading nations, using Communist ideology as a passport?*

ROSTOW: The Soviet Union is still in the imperial mood of the 18th and 19th centuries—a mood the West has given up with relief. This means that the Soviet Union takes advantage of every opportunity for expansion wherever it may arise in the world and has an overall strategic doctrine. And the Russian doctrine is the old and very familiar geopolitical doctrine that he who controls the Euro-Asian land mass controls world politics. In other words, if Western Europe can be added to the Soviet dominion, then Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East too will fall. Japan and China will draw the necessary conclusions and the US will be isolated. This is a perfectly respectable doctrine which the Kremlin has been applying with considerable skill. If an opening beckons in Angola or Aden, or wherever, of course the Russians will move in. The name of their game is splitting Western Europe from the US.

—The Western world can draw on a great fund of historical experience when it comes to dealing with **nations** *in a mood of imperial expansion. We are less well equipped to deal with* **causes** *of a universalistic and militant character. We could not stop Hitler with non-military means, and it would now seem that we cannot stop Soviet expansionism with the "civilian" tools in our defences. Or can we?*

ROSTOW: The ultimate issue of Soviet–American relations since 1917 has been defined in the nuclear arms talks with chilling clarity. It is whether the Soviet Union is a state like the others, willing to live as a member of the society of nations, and to abide by its rules—or whether the Soviet Union will persist in the suicidal view that its mission is to lead a crusade to spread the true faith by the sword or subversion.

When the matter is raised with Soviet diplomats and academics they say: "But you're asking us to change a foreign policy deeply rooted in the nature of our society and state." To that claim the only possible answer is: "Not at all. You can preach the gospel of Communism as much as you like, but the rest of the world cannot tolerate the use of aggression to achieve it. . . ."

—Isn't it one of our problems, though, that it is not necessarily through **aggression** *that the Soviets are trying to achieve it? We can (or so we like to think) handle aggression. It is the Soviet version of détente—"peace" on the wrappings but "war" inside—that we appear to be, as liberal democracies, singularly ill-equipped to handle.*

I just wonder whether we couldn't take our cue in fighting this from the example of the old "Committee for the Present Danger", of which you were the Chairman for several years. That Committee set itself a single broad task—to correct the military imbalance between the US and the Soviet Union, and it has done so with remarkable success. Several of its members occupy senior positions in the Reagan Administration. . . .

ROSTOW: . . . including, incidentally, the President himself. . . .

—And we can now see the Committee's policies being translated into action. The SALT II agreement has not been ratified. The US is engaged in a massive military build-up, and the nuclear imbalance is being rectified. We can foresee a time in the not too distant future when Soviet expansionism will be discouraged by the American intention and capability to stop it.

This is, however, I submit, only half the work to be done. Don't you think that public-spirited men in the USA and elsewhere ought now to think of readying our defences in the "soft" areas of trade and credit, diplomacy, culture and propaganda, so that we can also counteract Soviet policies in these much more ill-defined, much more difficult, but

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equally vital areas?

At home and abroad, the Soviet system has always invested heavily in public education and propaganda. Hasn't the time come for certain symmetrical counter-measures to be applied—even though one realises that democratic society offers great (and very natural) resistance to anything smacking of national morale-boosting or an official ideology?

ROSTOW: I can offer no constructive answer to your questions. I am very much aware of the problems you have touched on, and I once commented on them in a speech I made in London. I said we were at a great disadvantage in that sort of competition with the Soviet Union because we have a different attitude to truth. *We* act as if every statement we make were made within the limits of parliamentary debate and had to respect certain rules of evidence and stand up to criticism by people of a like mind. That is to say, we assume that our critics and opponents share with us a base of goodwill, tolerance for antagonistic points of view, and respect for the rule of law. Alas, these things do not bother the Soviet Union at all, either at home or in the sort of actions they support through their apparatus abroad.

LEONID BREZHNEV, *speaking at the 25th Congress in February 1976, made this very clear:*

> **"We do not conceal the fact that we see *détente* as a way of creating more favourable conditions for the peaceful building of ... Socialism and Communism. . . . Socialism and peace are inseparable."**

And as "peace" in the Soviet vocabulary is another word for the consummation of the "world revolutionary process", we cannot say that we have not been warned.

ROSTOW: Quite. But what, you ask, can we do to neutralise the Soviet attitude? All we can do is to plug away at trying to explain what we are doing—to justify it in rational terms.

It is an unequal struggle. On the other hand, we don't seem to be doing too badly with it. People are, on the whole, sensible. They are not easily swayed by emotionalism, evocations of utopia, or pie-in-the-sky type of arguments. Nuclear anxiety at the present time seems to be rather controlled. It is weaker than it was a year or two ago. It hasn't swept away governments. But the fact that nuclear anxiety exists does mean that democratic politicians and government officials have a great obligation to explain, explain and explain again. They don't always meet this requirement.

But I am much more concerned about another kind of nuclear anxiety: that flowing from the change in the nuclear balance, especially in ground-based ballistic missiles as distinct from other kinds of nuclear weapons. The US has made the profound mistake of allowing the Soviet Union to forge ahead in that category of weapons. It should never have happened; but it did happen, and now we are trying to offset the Soviet advantage by arms control and modernising our own forces.

That imbalance in these particularly destructive weapons is having an immense general impact, not only on politically innocent people and their demonstrations against "the Bomb", but also on serious and hard-headed Americans, some of whom are saying: "The commitments that were made by Truman and Eisenhower can get us into terrible trouble, so let's get out of the commitments. . . ." This is a dangerous train of thought. It can lead to a revival of American isolationism. Henry Kissinger added to the Western anxiety about the nuclear imbalance a few years ago with his celebrated comment that great powers do not commit suicide on behalf of their allies. And only quite recently (19 August 1982), former President Nixon wrote in the *New York Times* that the Soviet Union's achievement of superiority in land-based nuclear missiles has made our nuclear strength no longer a credible deterrent against Moscow's expansionism.

> **"We will [Nixon argued] not again be able to use the threat of that power as President Kennedy did in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, when we had a 15-to-1 advantage, or even as I was able to do during the Arab–Israeli war in 1973, when our advantage was far less formidable. Even if we restore the balance of those nuclear forces, we will not fully restore their deterrent effect for such purposes. A threat of mutual suicide is simply not credible."**

I have just given a speech in which I criticised Mr Nixon for this view. The Administration had to consider the question: Did we want a member of the Administration to take issue with the former President directly? The fact that Mr Nixon made nuclear anxiety in this sense more acute by his comments was considered so important that I was authorised to do so.

Anxieties about the American nuclear umbrella would exist even if President Nixon and Dr Kissinger had not spoken the way they did. They are there because nuclear weapons have mysterious political side-effects. They increase people's fears; they colour their perceptions; they are what former Chancellor Schmidt called "subliminal radiations" of the state of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and the state of the Soviet–American nuclear balance. They exist because we allowed the nuclear balance to deteriorate in the 1970s; and we shall have to live with the consequences of that mistake until the balance is restored.

I have said the change in the nuclear balance may

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manifest itself, in the US, in a revival of isolationism. But in Western Europe it could have much more serious effects. It could lead to European intimidation and ultimately accommodation with Soviet interests.

HERR HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER, *the German Foreign Minister, writing in the Fall, 1982 issue of "Foreign Affairs" would seem to share some of your analysis. While stressing détente as a necessary concept, he ascribes the setbacks in East–West relations in the 1970s (and the American disillusionment with détente) to American omissions in the pursuit of a policy of equilibrium. In the 1970s American arms-spending fell in real terms while that of the USSR continued to rise steadily. The US (Genscher says), suffering from the double trauma of Viet Nam and Watergate, seriously weakened its capacity to resist Soviet expansionism.*

My reading of the sense of Herr Genscher's argument is: "You have unwittingly pushed us and our public opinion into seeking some form of accommodation with the Soviets by playing the power-game extremely badly. NATO strategy, based on the Harmel report, has always stood on two legs: a quest for constructive relations ('détente') combined with the maintenance of the strategic balance. You allowed the strategic balance to go and are now desperate to restore it, while discarding détente as a failure. You must, however, remember one thing: no one-legged policy—no policy of pure and simple opposition—is feasible in the nuclear age. . . ."

ROSTOW: There is no question that our failure, in the 1970s, to keep up with the Soviet arms build-up had a destabilising effect on the Alliance. In that sense I agree with Herr Genscher. There is a tendency nowadays to say that, because the unforeseeable consequences of a nuclear exchange rule out nuclear war, the existence and size of nuclear arsenals have no political influence. This is nonsense. Nuclear weapons are what seapower used to be not so many years ago. The vessels of the British Fleet did not have to be used in order to produce a political impact. Their very existence and the potential threat they represented were enough. Nuclear arsenals are a new factor in world politics; but we know that they are a very powerful factor, even though our short practical experience with this factor makes it difficult for us to think of it coherently.

Let me ask you: suppose the US had won swiftly and effectively in Viet Nam in the Israeli manner—would the "anti-Viet Nam peace movement" have arisen on the American home front?

—Most probably not.

ROSTOW: And would the US have been able to use its conventional forces in Viet Nam more effectively if the nuclear balance had not been changing to our disadvantage?

—Yes, I think it would.

ROSTOW: Right; that strange nuclear tide pervades everything in the contemporary world, whether we are thinking of the politics of military affairs or the military radiations of politics. The American press has been marking in recent days the 20th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis; and I was astonished to see quite a few articles arguing that nuclear weapons had not much to do with the outcome in 1962. That is, of course, dead *wrong*—they had *everything* to do with it. We knew that we had overwhelming nuclear superiority, and if there was any escalation, we knew that we could control it. We had, through Soviet Colonel Penkovsky, extremely good intelligence, so we knew what the Russians were doing and what they were not doing, with both their nuclear and conventional forces. We knew that we could move our conventional forces around in the Caribbean without taking risks. We knew that the Soviets would not shoot nuclear weapons at our conventional forces because of the fear of reprisal.

It is, therefore, absolutely wrong to say that the nuclear element was not important in 1962. The nuclear element was *critical* in allowing us to threaten the use of conventional forces without fear or hesitation. And that is exactly what Mr Nixon was saying in the article I have just quoted—that no American President today could do what John F. Kennedy did in Cuba in 1982. I don't agree with Mr Nixon's observation; but it is none the less a very serious point, and many in the West agree with it.

—Isn't the crucial part of Mr Nixon's statement his warning that a **meaningful** *US superiority over the Soviet nuclear arsenal can never be recaptured:*

> **"Even if we restore the balance of those [land-based] nuclear forces, we will not fully restore their deterrent effect. . . . A threat of mutual suicide is simply not credible."**

And if that is so, what precisely will the word "deterrence" mean in our political-military vocabulary once the equilibrium has been restored between the two land-based nuclear arsenals?

ROSTOW: We must first look at the situation as it is now that the equilibrium has been disturbed. We were slightly ahead of the Soviet Union in the number of warheads on deployed Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles in 1972. In 1982, the Russians had a lead in this crucial area of approximately three to one. It follows that they have the theoretical capacity to execute a pre-emptive first strike

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against us by destroying our ICBMs and other nuclear forces with a fraction of their forces, holding the rest in an ominous reserve that could paralyse our remaining strategic forces. When the Soviet intermediate-range missiles are counted, the Soviet advantage in this category becomes even higher. Until this Soviet advantage is eliminated, through arms-control if possible, or the modernisation of our own strategic nuclear forces, it will not be possible to achieve world-political stability.

What we are seeking in our talks with the Soviet Union (both START and INF) is to establish nuclear stability at equal and much lower levels of force—a posture on each side which would permit us to deter both nuclear war and other forms of aggression against our interests.

—You have used the phrase "world-political stability." Elsewhere you have repeatedly spoken of a "world public order." I take these to mean the enforcement of the UN Charter against the international use of force and, more particularly, the end of Soviet adventures in expansionism. I notice that, in the article we've quoted, the German Foreign Minister talks of a European "peace order"—a phrase which is, if I read him correctly, close to détente in that it means "casting aside the basic conflict between East and West", and building bridges of dialogue and cooperation with the Soviet Union in the hope that these will mitigate the effects of the division of Europe. How does this conception of a European "peace order" relate to your "world public order"?

ROSTOW: World public order rests on the international rule of law; but that rule cannot be attained in practice until the nuclear balance is restored. The European peace order Herr Genscher foresees—and which, I agree, is very desirable—can only come about under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence. I'm sure Herr Genscher goes along with that. Had he said that a "peace order" exists in Europe at the present time, as some people have, I would answer that Western Europe is an island: its relative immunity has rested on the Soviet belief that our nuclear weapons would indeed be used in the event of a Soviet attack.

But, as you have pointed out, the Soviets are now working away at the security of the West European island through political means—through propaganda. That erodes the "peace order" and so does, of course, the change in the nuclear balance. World public order means respecting the rules embodied in the UN Charter. These rules constitute the only possible definition for the slippery word "*détente*." Unless the Soviet Union decides to abide by those rules, they will lose all their influence over the behaviour of any state, including those of the Western Alliance.

But let us not use the word "peace" without due care. President Reagan, in speaking of the objectives of American foreign policy, recently said: The goal of our foreign policy is to establish peace. Now, that is a very interesting word. He did not say to "restore" peace but to *establish* it. That means that what we have now is something other than peace. It reflects the realisation that from 1945, when the UN Charter was established, or indeed since 1917, the Soviet Union has considered itself exempt from the rules that bind all other states.

—Speaking informally to a group of European officials in Bonn in June 1982, the President made his meaning even clearer: "They [the Soviets] may not be fighting with us, but they are at war with us." Would you agree with that formulation?

ROSTOW: I always agree with what my President says . . . [laughs]. I wouldn't put it quite that way, but I see very well what he means. What we have between the Soviet Union and the West is a protracted conflict at the political level. But it is not just at the political level: it involves subversion, terrorism, and all manner of paramilitary and military acts. In the Caribbean—an area of very great sensitivity to the US—the Soviet Union is using force to help acts of aggression to be committed, establishing bases, sending guerrillas and arms. That is not peace, is it? The Kremlin is running a world campaign against the Western world and using whatever methods it can get away with. It invaded Afghanistan because the Soviet leaders correctly calculated that they could get away with it. The traffic, however, has not been all one way. The Soviets may have overreached themselves and are now visibly in trouble.

—It is a commonplace, but one that bears repeating, that arms control and disarmament talks cannot be insulated from the larger political context. They are subsidiary to resolving the East–West conflict of interests and philosophies. But deep conflicts of this sort can, if history is anything to go by, only be settled in one of three ways: (1) war; (2) pre-emptive surrender; (3) mutual exhaustion. I can recall no salvationist political system that did not go to war if its interests so demanded. Does the unique nuclear factor represent a unique historical opportunity too, so that the evidence of the past becomes, in this case, irrelevant to our concerns?

ROSTOW: The nuclear factor is different in degree, not in kind, from other mutations of military technology. Remember that a century ago Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, thought that dynamite was so destructive that it would force the human race to accept peace! His prediction turned out to be sadly wrong, but it is possible that the horrors of nuclear weapons will fulfil Nobel's

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dream. If we are reasonable and lucky, we can, I believe, avoid the use of nuclear weapons indefinitely.

But one thing we cannot do is to dis-invent nuclear power. The secret of the atom is out of the laboratory—it can never be put back. Any industrial country can make nuclear weapons. Therefore the Western nations can never give them up lest they find themselves prisoners of an Idi Amin or other irresponsible dictators. At the same time, nuclear war is unthinkable. Hence the Western world must find ways of defending itself without nuclear war.

Yet another factor we must bear in mind is this: since there can be no fireproof wall between conventional and nuclear war; since small wars can become big ones, and conventional wars can escalate to the nuclear level, the only possible policy for the West to pursue is one of complete and effective enforcement of Article *2* (*4*) of the UN Charter against conventional as well as nuclear aggression. *Aggression is the real issue, not the kind of weapons used.* In short, the nightmare of nuclear war should persuade all nations, including the Soviet Union, that peace really is indivisible.

But there are, at the present historical moment, also other factors that give me some hope for peace—above all the situation in Poland and what it represents. It ought to lead the Soviet Union, mired as it is in difficulties in Afghanistan and the Middle East, to want a period of stability in its relations with us.

I'm often asked: But precisely why should the Soviet leaders want to do so, seeing how disunited the West has become over Afghanistan and Poland? My answer is: because the Number One priority for any tyrannical leadership is to maintain power. The Polish situation is extremely threatening to the leadership of the Soviet Union. It is, therefore, just possible that one of the promising paths for maintaining power would seem to them to be a *genuine détente* with the US and the West: Western help to solve the economic crisis, relaxation of the arms race, and so on.

What other non-violent change can one foresee? There might be a change of policy after the departure of Mr Brezhnev. After all, the Swedes gave up their career in imperialism in the 17th century (in Western Europe, in any case) with the death of Gustavus Adolphus—though I'm not sure that the analogy fits, seeing that the Soviet commitment to expansionism is a deep one which has lasted almost three generations.

—What, then, is your answer to my question whether the deeper East-West conflict will resolve itself by war, pre-emptive surrender, or exhaustion?

ROSTOW: There may be a fourth way: maintaining a stable balance with the Soviet Union *and* negotiating an effective system of collective security. That would do away with the doomsday scenarios while preserving the essential values of Western civilisation. But even if that should prove impossible to achieve, mutual exhaustion is much more likely than war. Nuclear weapons make it difficult to conceive of war. The uncertainties which a nuclear war would involve must affect the Soviet leaders as much as they affect us. Nobody can, of course, completely *exclude* the possibility of a nuclear war; but the problem we are facing is political in the first place and military only in the second.

SO YOU FORESEE *a kind of Peace of Augsburg which ended the religious war in 16th-century Germany and established the principle of* cujus regio ejus religio?

ROSTOW: I would happily settle for that.

—But if we translate that principle into contemporary power-politics, Moscow would still retain its hold on the countries it has occupied, subverted, or invaded since 1945. Would the fact that Moscow would be left in possession of the loot not clash with the principle of a "world public order"?

ROSTOW: We would not send in the Marines, if that's what you are hinting at.

—The present East-West dispensation would, then, be preserved?

ROSTOW: I don't know about that. The rising in Poland portends something quite different. If there were to be a real relaxation of tension under some "Peace of Augsburg" type of a settlement and East-Central Europe were given a great deal of political freedom without being yanked out of the Warsaw pact—would the peoples of Eastern Europe sustain this perfectly ridiculous system that works so badly? Would the Russian people? I have my doubts. The Soviet type of societies spend an inordinate amount of the national product on the military, while the standard of living is kept miserably low. And what do they get in return for the belt-tightening and the military muscle? Conquests that have gone sour. Viet Nam and Cambodia and Afghanistan and South Yemen *are* in the hands of Soviet-orientated Communists. But what do these conquests really amount to? The man-in-the-street in the Soviet Union knows perfectly well that the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Afghans will kill these local Communists, together with their Soviet supporters, at the slightest opportunity. Therefore my tentative forecast would be

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that a genuine international political settlement would be followed by great domestic changes, first in Eastern Europe, and later in the Soviet Union itself. The Soviet system is exhausted, and the peoples under the Soviet system are exhausted too. There comes a time when the combination of these brings about the corruption, and then the eventual collapse, of the system.

—Let me ask you a slightly personal question. You are, as Director of ACDA, ultimately in charge of all US arms-control and disarmament negotiations. . . .

ROSTOW: . . . nominally anyway—

—and you have no doubt encountered a great many representatives of the Soviet side officially and unofficially, discussing with them nuclear weaponry and conventional force reductions; rocket "throw-weights" and infantrymen. How would you characterise the self-image of the Soviet Union as a super-power negotiating with another super-power? Is this a nation on the march with a great deal of self-confidence? Is it one which has just pulled itself up by its own bootstraps and is seeking recognition in the world? Is it loud and militant only because it has a chip on its shoulders?

ROSTOW: A self-confident power on the march—that is the correct characterisation. The negotiators we encounter are serious people, committed to their policy and basing it on thorough intellectual preparation and doctrine. They know what they are doing, and they are doing it for reasons which seem to them fundamental.

And that is why we find it so difficult to deal with them. We can't quite believe that they really mean what they say. We keep telling ourselves: They are bargaining . . . they are insecure . . . they don't trust their own legitimacy . . . they want nothing more than a place in the sun. . . . All these readings of the Soviet side—continuous since 1917—are nonsense.

—So we are being faced with an imperialist power in the traditional mould?

ROSTOW: Yes, in the old mould, with ideology as its passport—like whisky smuggled inside Bibles.

Working Late

At night she hears the tap, tap, tapping.
In the bedroom with sisters sleeping
the strokes continue, tip, tap, tapping
on into the early hours.

Her father in the shed makes boxes
for sending fish to Billingsgate
a place he's only read about
on labels for the journey.

Slender plinths supple to his hands
straightened, fixed, they are nailed into position
as the idea shapes and forms,
his name is somewhere along the side.

In the morning at the quay,
he bargains with the fishermen
bodies slither and glint in the boat,
scales of rainbows glance under the sky.

A steel bridge spans in a little hoop
over a flickering tide, blister of sea,
he bends protectively
securing down the lids.

At the back of the van, stacked in rows
the catch travels to Westport, Dublin, then London
bound for a salesman he has not met
and will never know.

Deirdre Shanahan

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DEBATE

A Reply to Conor Cruise O'Brien

Timerman's Long War

By Patrick Seale

THERE is something peculiarly objectionable in finding oneself quoted in support of political judgments one thinks soft-headed and even dangerous. This was my experience in reading Conor Cruise O'Brien's review of Jacobo Timerman's *The Longest War* in your January issue. O'Brien knows very well that I disagree with his views about Israel's Lebanese war, and so it was not a little malicious of him to mobilise me on his side of the argument.

He is an amiable man who writes entertainingly and to whose ideas on, say, Camus or Irish history I gladly defer. But I cannot go along with his new-found expertise on the Arab-Israeli conflict, set out in a series of columns in *The Observer* last year which I read with mounting incredulity, and now repeated—with some backing and filling—in his Timerman review. Among his unkinder remarks are that Timerman's analysis of Lebanese reactions to the Israeli invasion are "all stuff and nonsense", "faintly nauseating", "an insensitive display of sensibility", and that much of his testimony must be contested. O'Brien concludes by suggesting that readers of Timerman would be wise not to assume that his book is invariably reliable. I suggest that all these observations apply more appropriately to O'Brien's own writings on the Middle East.

In my view he betrays considerable moral arrogance in adjudicating a conflict he does not understand—a not uncommon temptation for pundits given regular space in the press—as well as a generous hatred for terrorism, due no doubt to his Irish background, but which he transfers uncritically to the complex Middle East context.

There can be no space here for a detailed rebuttal of all O'Brien's misjudgments, but I would like to single out six of the more flagrant in his apologia for Mr Begin's Lebanese war.

The first and most central concerns Israel's war aims. In *The Observer* of 13 June, a week after the invasion, O'Brien declared: "What is at stake on Israel's side is survival", and two weeks later in the same newspaper: "Israel's armed forces went into Lebanon in pursuit of armed enemies of their people, pledged to the destruction of their state." In other words he swallowed hook, line, and sinker Mr Begin's propaganda for the war, symbolised by its code name "Peace in Galilee." O'Brien was prepared for this act of faith by a conversation he had with a Palestinian captain in Tyre in September 1981. Apparently it was a blinding revelation—a conversation "which I shall never forget." The Palestinian denied he wanted to throw the Jews into the sea, but he did want to get rid of them in stages, first from the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and then altogether.

For reasons which escape me, this piece of wishful thinking on the part of the Palestinian, which nothing in the past 30 years nor more especially in the present balance of power gives the least reality to, appears to have left an apocalyptic impression on O'Brien's mind. "The feel of it was simply death to Israel."

In fact there is no independent expert today who does not share the view that Begin's war aims were, first, to smash the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) so as to make the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza more amenable to Israeli control; secondly, to substitute Israel for Syria as the dominant influence in Lebanon; and thirdly, to promote Israel to unchallenged pre-eminence in the Levant, able to dictate terms to both Jordan and Syria in fulfilment of the Likud government's ambitious forward strategy.

Whether all this has been achieved is beside the point, but that these were the aims is not in doubt. Israel's general security from Arab attack, and more specifically the security of Northern Galilee settlements from Palestinian rockets, were way down the list of priorities of Messrs Begin and Sharon, if they figured at all. A ceasefire with the PLO had ensured that for ten months, July 1981 to May 1982, not a single Palestinian shot had been fired at Israel. In Abba Eban's words, "The war erupted out of a situation of total tranquillity." The Egyptian boundary had been neutralised, Jordan had been quiet since 1970, the 1974 disengagement

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agreement with Syria had been scrupulously observed for eight years, the PLO in Lebanon was mortally afraid of attack. Peace by deterrence had already been achieved. To say as O'Brien repeatedly does that Israel's security, indeed survival, were at stake is laughably naive—a case of the poor man's heart being better than his head. The unprovoked war was none other than a bold geopolitical move.

By the time O'Brien came to write his Timerman review, he had in fact to concede that the PLO had been no sort of a military threat to Israel, but—still obsessed by his encounter in Tyre—he contended that "in political and symbolic terms" the PLO forces in Lebanon "cast a long shadow to the south. They constituted a question mark over the existence of the state of Israel." Stuff and nonsense.

NOW TO O'Brien's second misjudgment. Perhaps it was simply bad luck that on 19 September 1982—the very weekend when the world learned of the massacres of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila camps—he should be writing a party-political encomium in *The Observer* on behalf of the Phalange which perpetrated the massacres. The Phalange, he argued, were being unfairly treated in the Western media. Why, it was even a mistake to call them the Phalange at all, a name tainted by the fascist inclinations of their founder which they had dropped 33 years ago. They were the victims of a smear campaign. The movement should properly be called the Social Democratic Party of Lebanon! As may be seen, it would not be wise to assume that O'Brien is invariably reliable.

A third example of O'Brien muddle is his attack on Timerman for denying that the war created new opportunities in the region. Of course, O'Brien argues, the war did create "a new and wonderful opportunity . . . to negotiate a settlement for the West Bank, with Israel surrendering some occupied territory in exchange for recognised and secure frontiers and peace." But then he has to admit that, alas, Begin is not prepared to seize this opportunity: he "will not give up an inch of the West Bank." Mind you, this already shows some advance in O'Brien's thinking because on 13 June he was arguing in *The Observer* that any compromise over the West Bank and Gaza "is a compromise which Israel can move towards only by beginning to die."

Although glad to see that he is now discarding such gloomy thoughts one is still left with the odd conclusion that, if Begin's war *has* created a new opportunity, it is not one for himself but for his potential successors, the Israeli Labour Party. Is O'Brien really asking us to believe that Begin went to war in order to create opportunities for his domestic enemies?

A FOURTH MISJUDGMENT illustrates O'Brien's weak grasp of Israeli politics. He defends Begin against Timerman's charge of promoting confrontation between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Israelis, on the grounds that Begin "is the one Ashkenazi politician who is loved by the Sephardics of Israel." The fact is that this particular Ashkenazi climbed to power by deliberately exploiting and giving a voice to the grievances of Israel's emerging Sephardi majority. This is the ABC of Israeli politics.

A fifth point is where O'Brien has roped me in. In contradiction of Timerman's belief, he argues that "most Lebanese . . . are glad that Israel invaded Lebanon." It is of course true that, as I wrote in *The Observer* on 24 October, the Lebanese know that, but for Israel's expulsion of the Palestinian guerrillas, they would not now have a chance of regaining control of their country. But no Lebanese wants to exchange Syrian and Palestinian occupation for Israeli, and none believes Israel acted for any reason save its own national interest as Begin conceived it. The stubborn negotiations to get Israel out, as well as the mounting attacks on Israeli forces, are clear pointers to what the Lebanese really feel about their new occupiers. O'Brien has written that the Lebanese "accepted as unavoidable" the damage and loss of life of the war (ENCOUNTER), and that Israel's invasion was not "disproportionate to the provocation offered" by its armed enemies (*Observer*, 27 June). More stuff and nonsense.

In his *Observer* articles O'Brien beat the drum of Begin's war propaganda. Now in ENCOUNTER he is making some attempt to wriggle out of the corner into which he has boxed himself. The spectacle would be entertaining were the issues not so important. At considerable risk to his liberal reputation, O'Brien has lent his name to defending Begin's war—the most brutal expression (so far) of Likud militarism and ultra-nationalism. Above all, by encouraging Israel to hit first and talk afterwards, he has allied himself to the enemies of peace. This is what he wrote on 13 June:

> "Israel's neighbours have made it plain to it, from the moment of its birth, that if it wants peace it has to fight to get it. The only peace it can get, under any other terms, is the peace of death."

To believe this is to have understood nothing of Arab politics in the fifteen years since 1967. It is to

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ignore the Arabs' many peace signals. It is also to fail to grasp that Begin's greatest fear is Arab moderation—which might lead to talks, to his having to make concessions, perhaps to the loss of some part of the occupied territories. Begin's blows from Baghdad to Beirut, far from being battles in the fight for peace, are precisely intended to radicalise the Arabs and head off any peace overtures they might make, in order to give him time to complete the building of the Greater Israel of his dreams.

A Reply

By Conor Cruise O'Brien

I'M SORRY to have annoyed Patrick Seale, by quoting him. Mr Seale makes that quotation, and my use of it, his fifth point. I should like to make it my first one.

Mr Seale says it was "not a little malicious" of me to quote him. I find that odd. I bear no malice towards Mr Seale, and have no reason to. We are colleagues on *The Observer*—where indeed we are both "pundits given regular space"—and our relations have never been marred by the slightest unpleasantness.

I quoted Mr Seale, as I might quote any other writer, because his observations, on a particular point, tended to confirm my own impression. Jacobo Timerman had suggested that Lebanese felt towards Israelis as captives towards their jailers. As against that, I quoted three paragraphs from Mr Seale about the Lebanese "enjoying the passing of their long nightmare"—as a consequence of Israel's intervention.

Mr Timerman's impression of how the Lebanese feel is incompatible with Mr Seale's. I believe Mr Seale's version and I said so, and this has now earned me this lengthy rebuke from Mr Seale. But I ask readers to look carefully at the nature of the rebuke. Mr Seale does not say that I misquoted him, or quoted him out of context. He does not say that Mr Timerman's version is correct. How could he?

Mr Seale's trouble is that, on the point in question, the one I quoted him on, he and I are in agreement. I'm sorry he finds that so painful, but if there is any malice involved, it is the malice of Fate.

MOST OF Mr Seale's letter is taken up with discussion of a series of articles by me published in *The Observer* in the summer and early autumn of last year. In those articles, according to Mr Seale, I "beat the drum of Mr Begin's war propaganda."

Those of your readers who have read the articles in question will be able to judge for themselves whether that is a fair description of them. Those who didn't read them, but read what you published, my Timerman review, know that I wasn't beating any drum there. But Mr Seale has his explanation for that: "Now in ENCOUNTER he is making some attempt to wriggle out of the corner into which he has boxed himself."

You can't win, can you? If you're not beating a drum, the only explanation is that you're trying to wriggle out of a box.

Most of the matters on which Mr Seale takes me to task are matters of opinion and of interpretation. Mr Seale gives us his own interpretation dogmatically, and knocks down mine in the same way. He writes *de haut en bas*; he is an authority, whereas I am "an amiable man who writes entertainingly", but should confine myself to topics like "Camus or Irish history."

It would be better to have confined the argument to the topics under discussion. If I am really incompetent to discuss the topics, Mr Seale, as the authority, should be able to demonstrate that factually. Generally he doesn't. He just lays down the law. There is however one point, and only one, on which Mr Seale does *appear* to demonstrate that I am wildly wrong. This is in what he calls my "second misjudgment:"

> "Perhaps it was simply bad luck that on 19 September 1982—the very weekend when the world learned of the massacres of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila camps—he should be writing a party political encomium in *The Observer* on behalf of the Phalange which perpetrated the massacres. The Phalange, he argues, were being unfairly treated in the Western media. Why, it was even a mistake to call them the Phalange at all, a name tainted by the fascist inclinations of their founder which they had dropped 33 years ago. They were the victims of a smear campaign. The movement should properly be called the Social Democratic Party of Lebanon! As may be seen, it would not be wise to assume that O'Brien is invariably reliable."

If I had indeed argued like that, Mr Seale's concluding comment would be both justified and

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understated. If I had so argued, I would have demonstrated either ignorance or bad faith, or both. But I never argued in this way. I never pronounced "a party political encomium", or any kind of encomium "on behalf of the Phalange." The article in question contains not one word of praise of that organisation. I did not say or suggest that they "should properly be called the Social Democratic Party of Lebanon." And I made no charges about a smear campaign.

Let me briefly recapitulate the argument for which Mr Seale here substitutes his travesty.

I began by pointing out that the party was founded in 1936 with (as its French name) *Phalanges Libanaises*. I pointed out that the party dropped that French name in 1949. The party at that time gave itself the name, Social Democratic Party. I made clear that I thought that was a bit of a joke, in the condition of Lebanon. "The SDP idea did not catch on in Lebanon, what with one thing and another." I noted that the party themselves had dropped this one and I quoted a historian of modern Lebanon: "The party continued to be known as . . . The KATA'IB party."

I then asked the question why these people should continue to be universally known by a title they dropped 33 years ago.

In answering that, I not only made no accusations about a smear campaign, but explicitly rejected any such suggestion. My point was *not* that the media were wickedly traducing the innocent Phalange—which is what Mr Seale tries to make me say. My point was that the media try to meet a need felt by their readers etc, not to feel at sea, when they are at sea, among the unfamiliar. And I wrote:

"One way of meeting their need is to dot the alien and incomprehensible landscape with familiar markers: 'Right-wing', 'left-wing', fascist, Communist, etc. These descriptions, including 'Phalangist', do exist, on the ground, but mainly in order to mislead, by giving an appearance of generality and modernity to local and archaic feuds (compare the assumption by the main Catholic and Nationalist party in Ulster of the title 'Social Democratic and Labour Party'). Neither *Mein Kampf* nor *Das Kapital* is much help with understanding Lebanon. A history of the Scottish highlands in the seventeenth century would be more useful."

If I had written in the sense that Mr Seale claims that I wrote, then the massacres in the refugee camps—which occurred after my column went to press—provided a horrible refutation of such nonsense. But those ghastly events were quite in line with the realities to which I actually referred. The comparison with 17th-century Scottish history—meaning blood-feuds of clans—is all too pertinent. More than one writer has compared Sabra and Chatila to the Massacre at Glencoe.

Whether that comparison is or is not appropriate, however, is not the point here. The point is that Mr Seale grossly distorted my argument. If I found my words twisted in that way, in some polemical organ of the region, I should take that as all part of the day's work. But I am flabbergasted to receive this treatment at the hands of a respected colleague, who is generally a sober, careful and responsible writer.

I should like to ask Mr Seale to read over again that article of mine, and consider whether he has done justice, in this part of his reply, either to my argument or to his own professional standards. And I should like to hear what conclusion he reaches.

Driftwood

Is nothing,
Looks like nothing,
Draws damp into it and sits
Illogical beside the fire

Warming its salty soup of brine

But when it burns
It cracks and spits
From puce to cobalt,
White to white—

A perfect alchemy of heat.

Pete Morgan

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MEDIA

Letter from Geneva

A Footnote to Bias

By Frank Offenbach

IT WAS always a cliché, and during the last year it has become a very threadbare one—namely, that the free press in the Western democracies is devoted to truth-telling and that this in sharp and fundamental contrast to the practice of dictatorships which descend to exaggerations, half-truths, and outright lies. The events of 1982, and especially the summer war in Lebanon, should certainly have made clear to all who have eyes to see that our Western media, free and independent, do not always want to give the whole truth and nothing but the truth, in fact wallow about in bias and prejudice and often twist the news of their own free will: nobody "ordered" them to be one-sided and inaccurate.

The foreign correspondent or the TV-reporter is free to write and film as he pleases. But what is decisive is his sense of responsibility, his intellectual grasp of the complicated events he is faced with, his disciplined efforts at objectivity, and the general sense of fairness of the home organisation for which he works. The general failure of the media in Lebanon—and there are media-critics who argue that the situation elsewhere has been only marginally less culpable[1]—should provide material for hair-raising studies in the Western schools of journalism for years to come. That is to say, if the sense of honourable impartiality in these academic institutes is not also in a process of decay.

LET ME SUGGEST the longer perspective by giving a little of the historical context of Middle East reportage into which our dashing young men of the Western media, some well-meaning and naive, others devious and worse, descended in the summer of last year. After World War II the Lebanese capital was the only Arab centre in which journalists could move freely and write informed dispatches without incurring personal danger. In the recent decade all this went by the board as the PLO gained more and more influence with their military occupation of Lebanon. Consider some of the events between 1974 and 1982 when journalists were subject to brutal reprisals for writing what the Palestinians and/or the Syrians disliked.

5 May 1975: a bomb exploded in the rooms of the daily newspaper *Al-Muharrir*, destroying most of the building.
20 May 1975: An explosion in the printing plant of Ali Sabri.
8 August 1975: Bomb threats against the daily newspaper *Al-Mustaqbal*, which afterwards closed and moved its editors to Paris.
24 March 1980: Riad Taha, the president of the Beirut Association of Publishers, is shot.
9 November 1981: Bombs explode in the editorial offices of the daily newspaper *Al-Liwa*.

Nor was this terror confined to the "local difficulties" and their protagonists. A host of Western foreign correspondents were on the "hit list", having incurred the wrath of the Syrian and Palestinian military occupation. The murdered men of the press included: Larry Buchman (USA), Marc Tryon (Belgium), Edouard Saab (*Le Monde*, France, and editor-in-chief of *L'Orient-Le Jour* of Beirut), Robert Pfeffer (West Germany), Tony Italo (Italy), Graziella di Falco (Italy), Sean Toolan (USA), Jean Lougeau (France). Needless to say, these crimes were committed not only to eliminate "hostile elements", but also to discourage *les autres*. And the "discouragement" worked.

The outgoing Israeli chief press officer, Ze'ev Chafetz, compiled a dossier of the continued campaign of intimidation against the Western press—which curiously enough rarely made news in the Western press. Reuter hardly made any fuss about the small-calibre pistol shots fired at its Beirut bureau-chief, Bernard Debussman. The BBC confined itself to a tiny announcement that it was

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, Robert Elegant's critique of reporting in South-East Asia, "How to Lose a War" (August 1981) and Herb Greer's analysis of "Terrorism & the Media" (August 1982), as well as Reed Irvine's regular reports in his Washington bulletin *AIM* ("Accuracy in the Media").

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withdrawing its correspondent, Tim Lewellyn, as a result of threats from "pro-Syrian elements in Lebanon", and transferring him to Cyprus. (The threats followed a broadcast about an assassination attempt against the Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad.)

In 1981 the Marxist group within the PLO, the PFLP, abducted five Western correspondents, held them for 24 hours, and released them only after having threatened to kill them. One of the five was the correspondent of the *New York Times*, another came from the *Washington Post*. One of the conditions for their release—talk about not making concessions to terrorists!—was that the kidnappings were not to be mentioned in the press. The newspapers conceded the point. Nor did the *International Herald Tribune* make any mention of the Syrian threats against its correspondent, Joseph Fitchett, who had reported the Army helicopter shootings of political prisoners.

I am not, of course, attributing the future course of Western journalism in the Middle East, its errors of commission and sins of omission, to the simple element of intimidation. But men under pressure tend to see "the other side of the picture"; they begin to see what they believe, and believe in what they now see. And among the important new factors to be sighted in the 1970s was the power and wealth of the Arab bloc of nations. This became a new element in the "reorientation", especially when the new generation of journalists usually found it ideologically congenial to identify them sentimentally with the under-dogs of the "Third World" and a struggle for justice against dominating Western imperialism.

All this came together on 6 June 1982 when the Israeli Army made its military strike against the PLO in Lebanon, and ultimately marched its way into Beirut.

THE DOCUMENTATION of the extent to which what analysts in ENCOUNTER have referred to as "distortion, disorientation and disinformation" is mounting.[2] As Conor Cruise O'Brien reminded us in his critique of Jacobo Timerman's recent book (in the January ENCOUNTER), few Western newspapers and television reporters recorded the popular welcome accorded to the Israeli troops who were, in effect, liberating the populace from the seven-year-old PLO reign of terror. "Comment is free but facts are sacred" used to be the motto of the serious Fleet Street editors. Now they allowed every little reporter in the field to ignore all those facts which they "disagreed" with; and if they hated the Israeli invasion, which almost to a man they did, then nothing less than hateful could possibly come of it. More than that, few looked backwards at the recent context of events, the violence that had been taking place between 1975 and 1982. In fact many reports identified the old wreckage of the Lebanese civil war as the new damage of current Israeli military depredations.

Since the Anglo-American aspects of the general picture have already been sharply considered, I might only here add some special considerations of the German scene. Although in general there was an understandable effort "not to go too far" (as one unhappy German journalist put it to me), there were extraordinary outbursts, especially in the liberal-Left press and television studios. No one could impugn the reporting in the three great national newspapers of Western Germany: the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; *Die Welt* (which, in view of its owner's pro-Semitism, leaned the other way); and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (which was so alarmed at signs of public viciousness that it published a full-page *Plädoyer für Israel* by Dr Albert Wucher). The indignant counter-attack concentrated on the "big three" of the German weekly press: Rudolf Augstein's *Der Spiegel*, Theo Sommer's *Die Zeit*, and Henri Nannen's *Stern*. A typical quote (from Augstein) read: "Just as the Jews were victims of the Nazis, so the Arabs are now victims of the Israelis. . . ." [3]

A writer in *Die Welt* called attention to one significant incident. At a garden party in Tel Aviv, some four weeks after the Lebanon war began, there was an assembling of the international press to say good-bye to one of their colleagues who was leaving. One of those present happened to be a writer from Lebanon—she was May Murr, the editor-in-chief of a Beirut weekly, who has published several books of poetry and is also a lecturer at the Lebanese Military Academy. A number of the correspondents cut Mrs Murr demonstratively (one saying: "Oh no, we can listen to enough fascists elsewhere. . ."). In various conversations Mrs Murr tried to explain the Lebanese hatred for the PLO by outlining the Palestinian brutalities against her people, and even mentioned that one of her own students had been murdered by Palestinians. One correspondent simply walked out on her. As a *Die Welt* writer observes, "What she was saying just didn't agree with his views or that of his newspaper. And I assure you that the journalists I have been mentioning, who refused to listen to the Maronite-Christian side of the story, were able and respected

[2] See, in ENCOUNTER, Edward Alexander, "The Journalists' War against Israel" and Melvin J. Lasky, "*The Times* Goes to War" (September-October 1982); also, in *Commentary* (September 1982), Norman Podhoretz, "J'Accuse . . ."; in *The New Republic*, Martin Peretz, "Lebanese Eye-Witness", 2 August; and Joshua Moravchik, "Misreporting Lebanon", in *Policy Review* (Washington, D.C.), No. 23, pp. 11-66.

[3] For a fair-minded (and indeed gentle-mannered) critique of the West German media, see Walter Menningen's article in the special number of *Der Monat* (Nr. 285, 1982, pp. 127-134).

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German members of the international press corps in the Middle East. . . .[4]

NO WONDER their partisanship was so extreme and their language so excessive. This kind of vocabulary has not been seen in the German press since the end of World War II—and indeed the terminology was intended to suggest the comparison with the Nazi destruction of the Jews. Their reports were full of "the Final Solution (*Endlösung*) . . . murder of a people (*Völkermord*) . . . war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) . . . Holocaust . . . genocide . . ." etc. Their analysis based itself not on what the Israelis had proclaimed as their real war aims but on the "nasty truth" to which they in their journalistic wisdom were somehow privy.

Stern wrote (15 July) that "this is not a war but a campaign of extermination in the style of the penal expeditions of the old 19th-century imperialist powers. . . ." Theo Sommer wrote in *Die Zeit* (16 August) of "a campaign of annihilation against the Palestinians which Begin has now blown the trumpet for. . . ." *Der Spiegel* 's headline (in its issue of 14 June) proclaimed: "BOMBING THE PLO BACK INTO THE STONE AGE." Germany's TV Channel One (ARD, 7 October) announced (and the PLO quote went unchallenged) that "the Israeli war aim was to exterminate [*auszurotten*] the Palestinians." Finally, by 6 August, Theo Sommer in *Die Zeit* could bring himself to think of nothing but "the horrors of the Nazi past . . . and the horrors of the Begin present", which remark was nicely balanced by "the crimes of the *SS*-murderers . . . and the crimes [*Untaten*] of those who escaped their death camps . . . ."

One wonders what happened to all those simple-minded letters to the Editor which asked naively, if destruction and annihilation was the order of the day, why the Israeli army, trumpeted to genocide by Begin's bugle, had stopped outside Beirut; why if a final solution was on the agenda there had been regular advance warnings to both Lebanese and Palestinian civilians of imminent battlefield danger; why if "blood lust" and revenge were the motives there were no "side-actions" against the Palestinian Arabs within Israel itself and on the West Bank and in Gaza.

One protest was printed in *Stern* (30 September) from the pen of a young left-wing German who had emigrated to Israel, and he wrote:

> "All this talk about a Holocaust of the Palestinians, about a Final Solution of the Palestinian question—this is only a way you Germans are trying to deal with your own past history. When you think that you can accuse the Jews of being Nazis, then you won't have to be ashamed of Auschwitz any more. . . ."

Professor Edward Alexander's point about how that "six" in six million (the official figure of the Jewish dead in the Hitler era) got subconsciously mixed into the reported figures of "six hundred thousand refugees" in Lebanon, all dead, wounded, homeless, is less about numerological mysticism than propaganda cunning. Everybody—including the German media—went for the PLO pseudo-statistic, although a moment's calculation would have caused any sober editor to hesitate (the total population of the South Lebanese area being rather less than that). But if all were death and destruction, not a cat or dog could survive. *Spiegel*, after all, informed its readers: "After the first few days the south of once prosperous Lebanon was almost a gigantic rubbish dump." Showing a snippet of a photograph here and a camera angle there, the writers could come to the conclusion that the "almost" was, if anything, an underestimation—"From one border to the other Lebanon is a smoking ruin (*Von einer Grenze zur anderen ist Libanon ein qualmendes Trümmerfeld*). . . ." If the "solution" was not yet final, at least the destruction was now total.

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[4] See the article by Francis Ofner, in *Die Welt*, 19 November 1982, on Beirut reporting entitled "Krieg um Worte und Bilder."

[5] The debate in Israel has gone under the name of "*hasbara*", meaning the crisis in their information efforts and their failure to give what even there is called a "proper image." As Dr Moshe Yegar (Assistant Director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) remarked, "What can Israel do against a European camera-team that only wants to know blood?" He is the source for the following incident recorded in *Newsview*, the Tel Aviv weekly (30 November, 1982):

> "A well-known American television commentator recently did a special report on the West Bank, and an IDF [Israeli Army] patrol caught the TV crew asking local Arab youths to throw some rocks for the benefit of their cameras. In this case the distortion was prevented. But what about other cases where nobody intervened? Is a democracy exposed completely to the whims of TV? . . ."

WELL, six months have now gone by. The war, if not its painful tragedies and consequences, recedes into the past, and historians are beginning to look at the facts which reporters distorted, and television cameramen (in what has been called the "blood-lust of the little screen")[5] crudely melodramatised. What remains of the dispatches from the front? In the old phrase of Philip Gibbs, now it can be told.

But a record of shame remains. If any Western editor or correspondent has come forward and admitted to even a few errors here and there, to a deplorable bias which may have crept in, or to being an innocent victim of a little manipulation or a bit of disinformation, then I must have missed it.

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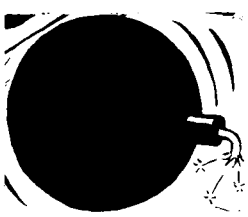
IN THE MARGIN

Terrorism & the Press

By Melvin J. Lasky

Toledo, Spain



THE much-feared bomb-shell didn't happen but, as the round-table meeting went on in an ancient Castilian palace here, there was excitement enough. For the first time, evidently, the Basque terrorists came out into the open—even if their representatives who sat among us were only "friendly lawyers" and "sympathetic editors" rather than the ETA (political and military) characters themselves. They had, quite unexpectedly, responded positively to the invitation of the prestigious International Press Institute to attend a European conference on the obviously life-and-death issue of "Terrorism and the Information Media." Who, at the moment, were better experts on, and living exponents of, propaganda of the violent deed? Publicity, if not power, comes out of the barrel of a gun. The armed Basque separatistic nationalists were with their shootings, kidnappings, and explosions making the headlines and the daily evening TV news. As one Madrid editor sadly recorded, they were in fact "getting more space and more time than all the other political parties, and even the Government itself, put together." Was this right? proper? necessary?

In a curious way only the Spanish issue raised the temperature of several dozen leading European editors, writers, and publishers who had come together to discuss—quietly and peacefully, one hoped—the state of European terrorism and its impact on the media. Nobody was complacent about the issue; but the general tenor of all reports was that the battle against terrorism had reached some kind of encouraging turning-point. On some fronts the news was good; on others it was not as bad as the dismay and alarm of yesteryear ("Baader-Meinhof" in Germany, the "Red Brigades" in Italy, the "Moluccan bandits" in Holland, the IRA in Northern Ireland) seemed depressingly to suggest.

The sensational Moluccan incidents, involving captured trains and helpless hostages, were by now ancient history. The Moluccan community had been appeased, and the Dutch had used a bit of sociology, economics, and anthropology to take the heat out of a terrorist confrontation. The Germans had apparently also scored a famous victory, over what they called with numerical precision "the third generation" of terrorists, i.e. new groups of young West German terrorists who could hardly recall the heady days of the late 1960s and early '70s, with their "Red Army Factions" and "Black September" cells. Last winter's meticulous police work had resulted not only in the capture of the leading wanted terrorists (average age: 25) but also in the seizure of their secret depots (arms, archives, passports, etc.). Unless there is a "fourth generation" in the making, both the German editors and the Federal police seemed to be proud of a major battle won. Nor were the Italians whom we heard far behind in confidence and optimism. Once, in the aftermath of the Aldo Moro tragedy, the Italian politicians and police began to take the subversion really seriously (and not blaming it vaguely on "sinister foreigners" and "vestigial Mussolinites"), the effective crackdown proceeded apace. Most of the leading activists, and their "theoretical, ideological" advisors, have been arrested and put on trial. The backbone of the movement—according to the specialist from *La Stampa* (Turin) whose editors had been high on the hit-list—was broken.

AS FOR THE ENGLISH, their curious formula of "an acceptable level of violence" made something of a stalemate of the running battle between IRA gunmen (and their Sinn Fein ideologues) and the British Army in Ulster. It wasn't the best of all possible worlds—the Queen's cavalrymen (and their horses) blown up in Hyde Park, a Ballykelly pub devastated. But when grisly memories go back to Cromwell's time, worse could be imagined. Occasionally the IRA pulls off a propaganda coup (successful fund-raising in the USA, a sensational interview by one of their bombsters on-the-run); but, on balance, nobody's winning, nobody's losing (except for the victims). If there was one lesson which was clear and obvious it was this: "ideological" terrorism could not for long intimidate the establishments of democratic societies; but terrorists who had "ethnic" or "territorial" bases for some popular support could hold out for a very long time.

IF I COULD READ the faces of the various Basque representatives at our round-table conference, they were not exactly displeased with the intellectual message. They were sticking close to the

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issues of Basque solidarity, and had (not unlike their Irish counterparts) reserves of sympathy "across the border" (that is, in Southern France). They were not going in for the delusions of misty Marxist utopias, but trusting to the grim persuasiveness which only a dozen midnight explosions, in a dozen little Spanish villages, could command. Above all, they had learned from all the propaganda techniques of the other European terrorists how to use the media, how to adapt their information strategy to the needs of the TV camera, to the deadlines of the newspapers, and indeed to the moral vulnerabilities of a free press desperate to be fair and objective.

"Why should I publish their *communiqués*, the way all of our other newspapers do?" shouted one Spanish editor from Navarre (who happened to be sitting next to me, having just got out of hospital)—"They pumped 29 bullets into me! . . ."

This was the most sensitive nerve of the Toledo debate. Could the new Spanish democracy afford the trained coolness of the BBC whose London political director (Mr Richard Francis) preached "neutrality" to them as between the police and the terrorists? Did an editor and journalist have a public responsibility to law and order, or only an absolute commitment to get the story and tell it? What was the greater danger—the social chaos and anarchy of bombster successes, or the government's insistence on press "cooperation" and even, perhaps, self-censorship?

ALL THEIR neighbours to the North, with decades and centuries of democratic reserves, had it fairly easy; Spain's new open society was untested and now being sorely tried. The Spanish press was zealous for its recently-won freedom to report as it pleased, to "publish and be damned." Spain's freely-elected officials were deeply worried that their post-Franco democracy might prove damnably ungovernable.

The friends-of-the-terrorists whom I watched and listened to around the Toledo round-table seemed to sense that here was a nice opening that would prove very useful. For here, as everywhere else, freedom distrusts authority and the independent press is locked in a class struggle with democratic government.

"What's wrong", said one Basque representative to me, picking up fast the "dialectical" weaknesses of the open society, "with our learning how to use these contradictions? . . ."

Catch as catch can

Catch as catch can what's asking to be caught
Or else be beaten to it by the bell.
Hardly a day passes without that thought.

Trammelled in tenses, snagged by could and ought,
The careful trekker cannot very well
Catch as catch can what's asking to be caught,

For what comes gratis, and what must be bought,
And what the long-term cost is, who can tell?
Hardly a day passes without that thought.

Old knots defy untying; guy-ropes, taut,
Stay one securely. Anglers up the fell
Catch as catch can what's asking to be caught:

To make a killing from an artful sport
They cast fine long lines like a subtle spell.
Hardly a day passes without that thought

As good scouts plod to their prosaic hell.
So can the weaver of a villanelle
Catch as catch can what's asking to be caught?
Hardly a day passes without that thought.

Jonathan Price

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Ruth Silcock

Christmas Shopping

Christmas. Two sisters shop together.
They always do. They always have.
They always meet at ten, and wave
And smile and rush and kiss and hug.
Both make complaints against the weather,
While each feels warm and safe and snug.

Then side by side, through crowds and snow,
Heads down, bags clutched, they push and shove.
Angels swing in the air above,
Stars clank on lamp-posts, banners beat
High over Selfridge's. Below
The sisters quarter Oxford Street.

From shop to shop, from store to store,
They pass through fashions, linen, toys,
Bedding, hats, carpets, men's wear, boys'—
Blazers, pyjamas, socks and ties.
The elder sister likes this floor.
The younger sister stops and sighs.

The younger sister's list is long,
For parents, husband, colleagues, friends.
She ticks and thinks and counts and spends
And asks Louise to hurry up.
Louise, the elder, stands among
Boys' sports, holding a football cup.

It always happens, every year,
When twelve has struck yet nothing's done,
When Jane (the younger) wants to run
Past counters, pluck up presents, pack
Her shopping-bag with Christmas cheer—
That Louise dawdles, drags, hangs back

To finger racks of flannel-suits,
To test a cricket-bat, to try
How school-caps look, to knot a tie,
To study badges, price a box
Of braces, measure football-boots
And touch the woollen football socks.

So, every year, they compromise.
Jane leads the way and clears her lists.
Then they eat lunch, while Jane insists
That now Louise's turn has come.
They swallow coffee and mince pies,
Then head for boys' wear, tea and home.

Loaded with packets, parcels, rolls
Of wrapping-paper for each gift,
They reach the lobby, take the lift
Down to the second floor, the racks
Of flannel suits. Louise patrols
Past jeans and shorts and anoraks:

She is a guard on sentry-go,
A scout, a fag, a midshipman:
Alert, a look-out quick to scan
Wide oceans; pilot, athlete, cox;
Wing, half-back, full-back, forward—so
Warm in striped white and scarlet socks.

Jane reads the paper, files her nails,
Does her accounts, takes off her shoes,
Remembers trains, pretends to choose
Shirts for a nephew, gazes out
At Oxford Street where sleety gales
Whirl stars and angels round about.

Louise cannot make up her mind.
She never has. She never will.
She hesitates forever. Chill
Mirrors of ageing women show
She is too late. But Jane is kind.
"Tea-time", she says, "before we go."

They always separate at five,
But first they have their Christmas tea.
With buttered fingers, they agree
How nice it's been. It always is.
Nothing must change. While they're alive
Each keeps the other safe by this.

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LETTERS

"Anthrax Bomb"

JULIAN LEWIS' article "Churchill and the 'Anthrax' Bomb'" [ENCOUNTER, February 1982] was well done. I was not surprised that it was not taken seriously by the British General Staff or Churchill. Even today with after 40 years of research worldwide, it is no more attractive.

I wish to point out that Brucella never was considered as a possible BW [Bacteriological Warfare] agent. The organism is subject to change when grown in large batches. I produced with Brucella *antigen* for three years, and hardly a fortnight passed that a rough phase (non-pathogentic) would appear.

Enclosed is a list of Zoonoses all of which had been looked at as possible BW agents. None are acceptable. Likewise, I know of no human disease agents, except possibly Myco-tuberculosis, that would be considered in BW. If one considers BW impact on animal industries, then there are many possibilities. In the past 30 years, I have visited laboratories in Europe, USSR, and Asia where related research has been going on. I have never had much enthusiasm for BW.

Let's keep the record clean.

JAMES H. STEELE
Professor of Environmental Sciences
Assistant Surgeon General (Retired)
United States Public Health Service

Health Science Center
University of Texas
Houston

Ronald Knox's "RC" Disc

A. N. WILSON (ENCOUNTER, February, p. 68) quotes the late Ronald Knox as saying in a sermon: "When we get to heaven, St Peter will not ask us whether we have been good or bad; merely whether we have RC stamped on our identity disc."

It is true that Knox said in an address to Catholic undergraduates (*The Hidden Stream*, 1952, p. 132; reprinted in *University and Anglican Sermons*, 1963, p. 242): "All the identity discs in heaven are surcharged RC." But he certainly did not mean either (1) that a Catholic who died in his sins would go to heaven, or (2) that no non-Catholic, however virtuous, would do so.

The first of these propositions could hardly be held by any orthodox Christian (what about Judas?), and certainly not by an old-fashioned Catholic. As to the second, in the same address—it is entitled "Salvation outside the Church"—Knox explained his meaning that the Catholic church was the *appointed* channel of salvation but that those outside might, if in good faith, be saved as what he called "Catholics without knowing it." He wrote similarly in chapter XVIII of *The Belief of Catholics* (1927) and chapters XXVIII and XXX of *Difficulties* (1932, 2nd. ed., 1952), an exchange of arguments about Catholicism between himself and Arnold Lunn. In the latter chapter occurs the sentence:

> "We can only suppose that God judges with infinite tenderness the opportunities, the temptations, the natural disadvantages, the motives, the struggles, of every soul that has ever lived."

I suggest that the record should be put straight for the sake of Knox's memory and of what Mr Wilson calls the "stern old religion" of fifty years ago.

P. S. FALLA

Bromley
Kent

Adorno in New York

IN HIS review of Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's book Mr Maurice Cranston states (ENCOUNTER, December 1982, p. 59) that in the 1970s Hannah Arendt "joined the faculty of the New School of Social Research in New York, ironically an offshoot of the Frankfurt Institute brought to America by her old enemy, T. W. Adorno." This statement contains several mistakes.

The New School *for* Social Research was founded by Alvin Johnson and opened its door to students in the spring of 1919 when Adorno was 16 years old. Hannah Arendt did not join the faculty of the New School, an institution for adult education, but the Graduate Faculty of the New School. It was founded by Alvin Johnson as the so-called "University-in-Exile" in 1933 before the Frankfurt Institute was given a haven by Columbia University. Adorno moved from London to New York in February 1938 upon the invitation of Max Horkheimer, the director of the Frankfurt Institute.

HANS SPEIER

Hartsdale
New York

Educational Follies

ESMOND WRIGHT'S timely reminder ("Our Schools: A Tragic Split," ENCOUNTER, January) of the excesses being practised in some American public school systems—and his lament for the collapse of standards here and the virtual destruction of the British grammar schools—will have interested anyone who is concerned about the state of our schools.

Certainly we can ill afford to ape on this side of the Atlantic the excessive concern for pupils' rights that he mentions. Too much damage has been done here already by trendy doctrinaires, who have exhibited an hysterical concern for so-called egalitarianism, combined with an insidious worship of anti-intellectualism, that has dragged down standards and driven many thoughtful and often better qualified pedagogues from the classrooms in despair. At the same time excessive libertarian zeal has undermined discipline; while the romantic notion that every pupil is happier and more successful doing as he or she pleases has almost put an end to traditional structured, purposeful learning.

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Nor have the reformers finished yet: given the chance, they would sweep away examinations, those bastions of standards, eliminate academic work—including the ending of English A-level examinations that help select pupils for university study—and generally reduce school to a bland, largely meaningless and effortless progress towards higher education, free and on demand.

It would be unfair to blame all of this recipe for educational catastrophe on our American cousins, many of whom have fought tenaciously over many years against the follies of the educational progressives. Indeed our own Labour party has been in the forefront of the "progressive movement" over here, particularly with their obsession with the comprehensive schools, the failings of which become more obvious all the time. We must also recall the history of Soviet education in the 1920s and early '30s before the iron hand of Stalin descended on the schools and restored a considerable measure of old-fashioned rigidity and discipline. An interesting glimpse of this phase of Soviet schooling can be got from the impressions of the veteran American reporter, Dorothy Thompson, published in England in 1929 under the title *The New Russia* (Jonathan Cape); one brief quotation will suffice—

> "This school-life is chaotic, disorganised, tentative, experimental, a life in which teachers struggle with students to determine who shall rule; in which no formal discipline prevails, in which fully as much time is spent in social organisation . . . as in work. . . ." (p. 211, ch. IX.)

In those halcyon years of the '20s all the libertarian notions so dear to our own reformers of the Left were enthusiastically and disastrously put into practice.

It can surely not be a coincidence that extremist elements today in England have enthusiastically supported those very measures that the verdict of history has shown to be so damaging.

J. H. K. LOCKHART

London

On "Buzz Words" (or jargon for jargon)

ABCDEFGHI
abcdefghij

THE only fault in Lord Denning's masterly assault on legal and bureaucratic Jargonauts—"lost in their own obscurity," he accused at the annual Plain English awards—is that it didn't go far enough. Our language is infested with dry and wet rot. Hardly surprising, when so many people talk and write just that.

But it is all only part of the Jargonaut Syndrome. Right across society from playground to union headquarters, the wonderfully precise tool that is English, offering an exact and generally simple word for every use, is being rusted by gobbledegook. Cant of all kinds—political, slangy, fashionable, alluringly known as 'Buzz Words' (jargon for jargon, come to think of it)—strives to oust Plain English.

HANDS UP all those remembering the drone of meaningful . . . open-ended . . . inter-personal! Some of *THE* words of the late-Sixties.

The soberer Seventies were a boom time for Environmental Speak:

***organic* . . . *whole* . . . *global* . . . *doomsday* . . . *resources* . . . *ecology*.**

There was an earnestness, a sort of new puritanism, reverberating in the Buzzes; dialogue . . . structural . . . multi-national . . . Third World. We also got

***non-violence* (what's wrong with peaceful?) . . . *urban renewal* . . . *secularisation* . . . *strategy* . . . *ecumenical* . . . *verbalisation* . . . *alternative technology*.**

EIGHTIES BUZZ, *so far, has spawned caring . . . single-parent . . . (nonsensical if taken literally) relationship . . . awareness . . . consciousness (as in consciousness-raising) . . . multi-purpose.*

Oh yes, and all the ists-and-isms: racism . . . elitist . . . entryism . . . ageism.

Along with the cant-decanters are the show-offs. They grab for the right-sounding word and get it wrong. Prestigious *is judged from trickery, sheer sleight of hand, to high praise.* Disinterest, *meaning lack of bias, skids into uninterest . . . .*

WE ARE building mazes of inner-city, community-based, spontaneous, loving, workshops where we indulge in encounters, multi-culturism, alientation and ethnicicity. ("You sound ETHNIC," a snooty young actress recently complimented my Somerset accent.)

Things tend to be orientated (male-oriented, politically-oriented, community-oriented) and run by a pressure group, movement, task force or crusade.

There are Buzz Words to tart up homely things. No more Halls, Clubs or Institutes—Centre Rules, O.K.? Sports, health, day-care, community, social centres, everything but a Centre Centre, *and that cannot be far off.*

Forget rooms, people meet in Bar Areas *or* Coffee Lounges, *while parks become* Play Areas. *A Church congregation is a Caring Community, a busybody is a Spokesperson.*

Trendy parsons, when not vandalising their literary heritage, contribute scores of Buzz Words such as pastoral, sharing, reconciliation, celebration, creativity, awareness, and sensitivity. There's no real Buzz Word obfuscation of God but give them time.

BUZZ WORDS are treacherous, often reversing meaning. "*Caring parents*" can be irresponsible mothers and fathers afraid of the unpopularity and effort generated by discipline. Relationships tend to concern people more interested in sex than becoming related.

"Functional" architecture embraces homes failing to function—leaking or unopenable windows, broken lifts. Community can cover groups of warring factions.

And so it goes. Lord Denning has gored Bureau Speak, but that is only a start.

Resist the Jargonauts. Before meaning and common sense die, not with a whimper but a Buzz . . . .

Shaun Usher
in the DAILY MAIL *(London)*

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Esslin's "Brecht"

I WAS very grateful for Martin Esslin's ENCOUNTER article on Bert Brecht (December 1982), and indeed for the excellent research work in German and Soviet archives of Professor David Pike (as incorporated in his recent book *German Writers in Soviet Exile, 1933-45*). It is about time that Brecht himself was looked at in the ironic and realistic way which he always held to be the critical ideal.

Unfortunately, readers and writers of Brecht, not to mention the naive-obtuse producers of his pieces in the theatre, always took an embarrassingly simplistic view. They either took him at his word (all those mean-spirited Stalinist pieties!), or they conjured up some devious "Galilean" figure who secretly believed in the truth and only because of his open Communist political commitment found himself saddled with "difficulties in writing the truth." Actually the truth is in the psychological middle. He was, like many endowed literary spirits of our century, simple-minded in form and complex in content; he rendered unto his Caesar what the Caesarean party-line demanded, and then played in the dark with heresies, subtleties, and deviations.

Martin Esslin's book on Brecht, subtitled *A Choice of Evils*, went into this problem many years ago. Now we have so much more evidence of the "evil" to which a formidable man of letters, very talented (more than that: touched with genius) and vastly influential, found himself committed because at least one half of his mind and spirit was caught up in an orthodox belief and loyalty to gods that may have failed privately but never in public. For example, Sidney Hook has told us in his memoir of his passionate argument with Brecht who held fast to Stalin's version of the Moscow Show Trials of 1936-38—and if the victims were innocent, then the Revolution needed their confessions of guilt even more! . . .

The other day I came across some verses of the well-known German writer-in-exile, Hans Sahl, who still lives here in New York. Since you have published some of Brecht's poems in German, perhaps you will find space for Sahl's lines of 1944 giving a poignant vignette of yet another critic's writer's "Difficulties in Getting Along with the Poet Brecht", together with my own very modest prose translation which cannot capture the ironic parodies of Brecht's own style, rhymes, and puns....

New York City NORMAN MAYLAND

Schwierigkeiten im Verkehr mit dem Dichter Brecht (1944)

Von HANS SAHL

Der Dichter Bert Brecht sagte zu mir
nachmittags um vier
siebenundfünfzigste Straße Ecke Lexington Avenue:

Hören Sie zu,
dieses Gespräch macht mich nicht glücklich,
verlassen Sie augenblicklich
mein Zimmer
für immer.
Ich dulde nicht,
daß in diesem Appartement,
welches mir sehr behagt,
jemand etwas Schlechtes sagt
über den Mann im Kreml.

Ich erhob mich von meinem Schemel.
Und außerdem, sagte der Dichter Bert Brecht
und hob den Finger,
man darf nie gegen die Armen sein,
und verließ das Zimmer.

Ich setzte mich wieder auf meinen Schemel
und sagte (im Hinblick auf den Mann im Kreml):
Eben weil ich für die Armen bin und mich zu ihnen zähle,
möchte ich nicht, daß man sie verfolgt oder quäle.
Ich gehe, wohl wissend, was Sie bewegt
und daß beim Schreiben der Wahrheit, Herr Brecht,
die Schwierigkeit eben darin besteht,
daß man sie nicht unterschlägt.

The poet Bert Brecht said to me, one afternoon around four, it was on Lexington Avenue and 57th Street.

Now listen to me, I'm not at all happy about our conversation, so would you this instant get out of this place forever—I'm very comfortable in this apartment and have no patience with anybody saying bad things about the man in the Kremlin.

I got up from my stool. And, even more than that, said the poet Bert Brecht, one must never be against the Poor, and he waved his finger at me and left the room.

I sat down on my stool again and said (with reference to the man in the Kremlin) that just because I was for the poor folk and counted myself among them. I didn't much like it when they were persecuted or tortured. I leave now, knowing full well what moves you. But you see, Herr Brecht, the real difficulty in writing the truth is taking care that the truth doesn't get repressed.

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AUTHORS

Malcolm Bradbury is Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia. His novels include *Eating People is Wrong* (1959), *Stepping Westward* (1965), and *The History Man* (1975). His latest, *Rates of Exchange*, from which "Recep." is an excerpt, will be published in the US by Knopf, and in England, on 5 April, by Secker & Warburg.

David Marquand, Professor of Contemporary History and Politics at the University of Salford, was a Labour Member of Parliament for Ashfield from 1966–77, when he joined the staff of Roy Jenkins, the newly appointed President of the European Commission in Brussels. He has been a member of the National Committee of the SDP since the beginning, and is SDP prospective parliamentary candidate for High Peak in Derbyshire. His biography of Ramsay MacDonald appeared in 1977, and *Parliament for Europe* in 1979 (Cape); he is the editor of *John Mackintosh on Parliamentary and Social Democracy* (Longman, 1982). Among his articles in ENCOUNTER are "Inquest on a Movement" (July 1979)—a study of the causes of the Labour Party defeat in the 1979 election which was co-winner of the 1980 George Orwell Memorial Prize—and "Trying to Diagnose the British Disease" (December 1980).

Alun Chalfont was Defence Correspondent of *The Times* from 1961–64, when he was created a Life Peer, serving in Harold Wilson's Cabinet as Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, until 1970. His most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER is "Stormy Atlantic Weather" (January 1983).

Peter Redgrove's latest novel is *The Facilitators* (1982), published by Routledge, who in the same year brought out his most recent book of poems, *The Apple Broadcast*.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London. His profiles of House of Commons personalities, *The Senate of Lilliput*, will be published later this year by Faber.

François Fejtö is Paris correspondent for *Il Giornale Nuovo*. He is the author of *The French Communist Party* (M.I.T. Press, 1967) and *History of the People's Democracies* (Penguin ed., 1974).

Terence Hawkes, Professor of English at University College, Cardiff, is General Editor of the *New Accents* series (Methuen). His own books include *Metaphor* (1972), *Shakespeare's Talking Animals* (Edward Arnold, 1974), and *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Methuen, 1977).

John Bossy, Professor of History at the University of York, is the author of *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850*, published in Britain by Darton Longman & Todd (1976, paperback 1979), and in the US by Oxford University Press.

John Bayley is Wharton Professor of English Literature and Fellow of St Catherine's College, University of Oxford. Among his books are *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (Routledge, 1981), *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge University Press, 1978, n.e. 1981), and *The Uses of Division* (Chatto, 1976).

John Mole's most recent book of poems is *Feeding the Lake* (Secker, 1981). He is co-editor of an anthology, *Poetry 1945–80*, to be published this year by Longman.

George Urban graduated from Budapest University in 1947 and obtained his Ph.D. at the University of London in 1956. He served with the BBC from 1948–60 and from 1960–65 was director of university broadcasting for Radio Free Europe. He is now academic consultant to RFE, and recorded his conversation with Eugene Rostow on their behalf. Among numerous publications, he has edited *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977), *Eurocommunism* (1978), *Communist Reformation* (1979), and *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (1982), all published by Maurice Temple Smith. Many of the extended conversations which appear in his books had their first publication in ENCOUNTER.

Frank Offenbach lives in Bonn, and is a free-lance journalist specialising in the Middle East.

Patrick Seale writes on Middle Eastern affairs for *The Observer* in London. Among his books are *The Struggle for Syria* (1965), and, as co-author, *French Revolution 1968* and *Philby: The Long Road to Moscow* (n.e. Penguin, 1978).

Conor Cruise O'Brien, Irish historian, literary critic, diplomat and politician, is the author of a book on Camus (1968) and of works on the history of Ireland and on the United Nations, where he served under Dag Hammarskjøld. From 1962–65 he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana. He was a Member of the Irish Parliament and then a Senator from 1969–79, serving for four years as a Minister in the Labour Cabinet of Liam Cosgrave. He was until recently Editor-in-Chief of *The Observer*, for which he still writes a regular weekly column. His article on "Liberty & Terror" appeared in the October 1977 issue of ENCOUNTER.

WE REGRET that in the March issue (Leonard Schapiro, "Russian Censorship, Then & Now", p. 86, line 6), the year in which *The Contemporary* was founded by Pushkin was erroneously given as 1856; it should of course have been 1836.

The Uncertain Ally, by Michael Chichester and John Wilkinson (reviewed by Philip Towle in the March issue) is published by Gower at £15.00.

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Life & Letters Today

London

THROWING THE FIRST STONE: *There are, broadly, two schools of thought about dealing with young hooligans who hurl a stone through the church window during Evensong.*

There is the Turn-the-Other-Cheek tendency—"Would you feel better if you broke some more windows, lads?" And there is the Smite-them-Hip-and-Thigh Church Militant.

Father John Twisleton is an instinctive adherent of the latter. When a stone the size of a fist crashed through a leaded window and narrowly missed an elderly lady at prayer, he wasted no time in agonised debate.

Before you could say **"Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous"**—(PROVERBS 27 : 4), *he was out of the pulpit and away, cassock and surplice flying, in hot pursuit.*

Close behind him came the altar boys of St. Wilfrith's and half of the 40-strong congregation, possibly recalling HEBREWS 12 : 1—

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

The chase continued for more than half-a-mile through the narrow village streets of Moorends, near Doncaster, until the wrongdoers were cornered behind the fish-and-chip shop.

Father Twisleton—**"I have pursued mine enemies and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed"** (PSALMS 18 : 37)—*forcibly pointed out the error of their ways and handed them over to the police.*

"They have repented. The sins of the sons have been visited on their fathers in that they volunteered to pay for replacing the window, and now mercy is the order of the day".

DAILY MAIL

Rome

PARITY: **Evidently choruses that like to sing together like to strike together. The Opera Chorus of the Rome Opera is now threatening to strike in order to prevent their having to sing Jules Massenet's *Manon* in French—unless, of course, they are paid extra for the burdens of sounding off in a foreign language. The Chorus has already gone on strike against having to sing along in linguistic harmony with the soloists of *Tristan and Isolde* who are doing it, of course, in German.**

DIE WELT (*Bonn*)

Horsham

BEETHOVEN AS PACIFIER: **The new "no leather jackets, no helmets" rule at The Crown pub in Horsham's Carfax was explained this week by licensee Mr. Lee Lyons.**

"It's unfortunate but the biker's uniform has become associated with trouble by 90 per cent of the public, who treat it with fear and suspicion," he said.

"Since I imposed the ban, my business has increased by 200 per cent. Most of my customers don't like leather jackets and I personally treat a motorcycle helmet not being worn as an offensive weapon.

"My reasons for the ban are purely business ones," he said. "This is not a vicious vendetta by a fascist landlord against the peaceful brothers of the bikers' brigade!" "I've got a nice mix of age groups coming to the pub now and I can control exactly who's in here by the minute. I don't and won't have a jukebox, so if the crowd gets too predominantly young, I put on Beethoven to redress the balance. It only takes a few minutes."

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES

London

GAMESMANSHIP: *The meetings which take up more time than all the others put together are of course those of the European Economic Community. [Samuel Brittan writes].*

"The greatest problem is the risk that some British chairmen will really be impartial and have not yet learned the art of taking a broad Community view while ensuring that their own country gets the better of the deal." But Mrs Thatcher is unlikely to be amused by such foolishness and will expect her Ministers to learn very quickly that, behind the etiquette, no holds are barred in the Community game.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Westminster

ALIENS: *"The country is living through a tragedy the dimensions and consequences of which we have scarcely begun to grasp", Mr Peter Shore (M.P., Labour) in the House of Commons said. But who was to blame, apart from the two monsters sitting on the Government front bench opposite him?*

Suddenly, he was raving about "the alien philosophers, Friedman and von Hayek." He mentioned the **von** *in the name of the gentle Austrian Nobel prize-winning economist with special brutal emphasis, as in* **von** *Ribbentrop.*

The thought crossed one's mind: supposing a Tory member had used the adjective "alien" to describe any of the **Left's** *savants—or indeed anyone including real aliens. There would have been uproar.*

The further thought crossed one's mind: which side has got the highest number of alien economists anyway. Labour's bear such fine old roast beef and Morris dancing names as Balogh, Kaldor, Engels, Marx. At least the supporters of capitalism [Frank Johnson writes] can produce one with the name Adam Smith.

THE TIMES

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